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Photo by Chris McLennan

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Managing Editor: James Ostinga

jamesostinga@yaffa.com.au

Editor: Robert Keeley

robertkeeley@yaffa.com.au

Contributing Editors: Peter Burian, Shubroto Bhattacharjee, Mark Galer, Prashputita Greco, Anthony McKee and Saima Morel.

ADVERTISING

National Sales Manager: Jodie Reid

(02) 9213 8261 jodiereid@yaffa.com.au

Advertising Production: Dan Lal

(02) 9213 8216 danlal@yaffa.com.au

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Martin Phillpott

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Publisher: Jeremy Light

Production/Circulation Manager:

Lamya Sadi

Marketing Manager: Chris Hamilton

Production Director: Matthew Gunn

Art Director: Ana Maria Heraud

Studio Manager: Lauren Esdaile

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Robert Keeley,
Editor

Just One Shot

It was just one photo amongst thousands I took on a recent trip to Sri Lanka, but it set me thinking. In photographic terms it wasn't even anything out of the ordinary, a little under-exposed and made in poor light. I'd been invited to photograph a cricket tour going to the country and though it was an extremely packed schedule, it also proved a great chance to make images of the locals and the amazing landscape. As well as photographing the Under 17s squad games, I occasionally got out amongst the landscape to capture both it and the friendly locals.

We were staying just north of Galle on the southwest coast when the chance arose to jump into one of the ubiquitous tuk tuks (small trikes which can carry three passengers) and head along the coast. Around dusk I visited a temple and as I strolled along a series of adjacent stalls I spied an old man in a sparsely furnished timber booth, with just a couple of tattered posters on the wall behind him and an almost empty table in front of him. He spoke no English, but his face spoke of many hard years of work eking out a living. When I indicated my interest, he smiled and stepped up to the table, straightened himself, and allowed me to snap a couple of frames. I thanked him and was about to move on when he motioned to see the image.

So I showed him, and his reaction was remarkable. I'd been told earlier that some locals may never have

seen any photos of themselves, and certainly by his reaction he could have been one of those individuals. He was delighted to see his picture. His wife moved close to look, as well as a handful of others. They were all animated and pleased. Then he made gestures to indicate he'd like a copy. Of course he had no computer. In fact he didn't even seem to know what I was talking about when I tried to explain it was a digital image. But his wife seemed to have some idea. So he walked with me to a nearby security office and borrowed a pen, carefully printed out his name and address, and enthusiastically indicated I should send him a copy when I got back.

Later I thought about the ocean of "selfies" floating around the web, the endless images on Facebook which members of our touring party had posted without a second glance (or maybe even a thought), and the multiple thousands of digital images our group had taken, most of which we'd probably never look at again, and I recalled how significant one photo, taken in the right circumstances, can be. Maybe that makes up for the digital deluge we all now find ourselves in. Back home, I made the time to get down to one of our increasingly rare local labs to get an 8x10in print, and I posted it off to Wimalajeewa Ranathilaka. I hope he likes it, and maybe now he even has it on his wall. 🌟



IMAGE BY ROBERT KEELEY

LEFT

A quick snap of a local resident by the editor carried greater implications for the subject.

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Shooting live performances is one of the toughest gigs in photography. Rob Ditessa talks to three pros who explain how they manage the challenges.

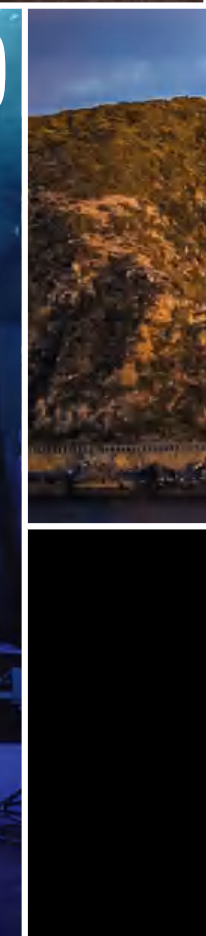
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COVER

Spring morning before sunrise in Kanmantoo, SA. Photo by Dylan Toh. Canon 5D Mk III, 16-35mm f/2.8 lens @ 21mm, 2s and 4s @ f/16, ISO200, tripod, graduated ND filter. Exposure blending, colour and contrast adjustments in Adobe Photoshop CC.





Star Light

PHOTOGRAPHER Andrew Campbell

My backyard in Burwood, suburban Melbourne, seems an unlikely place to be photographing distant nebula, but with the right tools, patience and many late nights, images like this one are possible. This photograph of the Seagull Nebula NGC 2327 was made using a 660mm Williams Optics telescope and a QSI 683 Cooled CCD astronomical camera. Unlike ordinary digital cameras which have a Bayer RGB filter array over the sensor, this astronomical camera has a monochromatic sensor. To create a coloured image like this, you have to make three separate exposures (often of several hours duration) using three separate 5nm narrow bandwidth filters (in this instance an H α , an S2 and an O3 filter) to capture light frequencies specific to chemical signatures in the stars. The narrow frequency range of these filters helps to eliminate the normal light pollution that you get around a city. The three monochromatic images are then assigned to RGB channels in Photoshop to create this faux colour image. This same technique is used by the crew driving the Hubble Space Telescope! One of the big challenges is simply keeping the telescope tracking the one tiny patch of sky for several hours at a time, often over several nights so you can overcome the signal-to-noise ratio and get enough photons onto the sensor to get a good exposure. This is where having a solid tripod and a decent equatorial tracking mount really becomes important. I first got interested in astro-photography three years ago, but it took at least six months to get my head around the science, maths and processing that go into capturing images like this. Over the past two years though, I have been more consistently capturing images that I've been happy with and last month one of my images was successful in winning the Central West Astronomical Society's Prestigious David Malin Deep Sky award. With a folio of four of these images I was also named the AIPP Victorian Science, Wildlife and Wild Places Photographer of the Year for 2015.

**QSI 683 CCD CAMERA, WILLIAMS OPTICS
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Quick snaps



Panasonic GX8: first MFT camera to pass 20MP barrier

When it goes on sale in September, Panasonic's new Lumix DMC-GX8 will be the first Micro Four Thirds camera to pass the 20-megapixel barrier. The 20.3-megapixel GX8 is also the first G-series camera with Dual IS, Panasonic's anti-shake system that combines sensor-shift and lens-shift technologies to achieve more stable hand-held images.

Other key features include 4K (3840x2160 at 30p/60Hz) video, maximum continuous shooting speed of 8 fps and a top ISO speed of 26,600.

Unusually, the GX8 has a 'tiltable' electronic viewfinder with an impressive 2,360,000-dot resolution and 100% field of view. Panasonic says the response time from the OLED viewfinder and rear monitor is less than 0.01 seconds.

The autofocus system has also been beefed up, with the GX8's Contrast AF System using DFD (Depth From Defocus) technology which speeds subject acquisition (around 0.07 seconds) and improves focus accuracy. The contrast detect system can be used in light levels as low -4EV.

Wi-Fi and NFC are built in so users can connect the camera to a smartphone or tablet to share images or control the camera wirelessly.

The DMC-GX8 will be available in September with pricing starting at \$1,399 for the body-only version.

Aussie celebs bare all in new exhibition

An upcoming exhibition at The National Portrait Gallery, *Bare: Degrees of undress*, celebrates the role of the nude and the partial nude in Australian portraiture.

Featuring over 90 portraits from the Gallery's collection, the exhibition includes paintings and photographs, mostly of Australian celebrities in various states of undress.

Curator of the exhibition, Penelope Grist, said she was fascinated to discover almost all the Gallery's nude and semi-nude portrait sitters were Australia's foremost creatives and sportspeople; the majority being men with their shirts off.

"Bareness is not as extreme as nakedness and not as refined as nudity. Bareness emphasises something about a subject's identity as well as

reflecting society. The decision to uncover part, or all, of the body in a portrait is at least as significant as a choice of clothing. Visitors to Bare will see these portraits in a completely new way."

The exhibition includes images of Megan Gale, Ian Thorpe, Michael Hutchence, Billy Slater, Germaine Greer and Dame Edna Everage, among others.

"Bare will be fun, whilst also interrogating our instinctive reactions to bareness," said Grist.

As part of the exhibition the National Portrait Gallery has also created The Bare Game which visitors can play online and in the gallery to discover their own nude alter-ego from art history.

Bare: Degrees of undress is at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra until 15 November 2015. Entry is free.



ABOVE

Ian Thorpe 2002, by James Houston, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Gift of the artist 2002.

LEFT

Michael Hutchence 1997, by Polly Borland. National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Purchased 2000.



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Panasonic tackles smartphones with Lumix DMC-CM1

Panasonic has launched the LUMIX DMC-CM1, a unique Android smartphone with a large 1-inch image sensor and a fast 28mm f/2.8 lens.

Panasonic says the CM1 is the answer to the question, "Do I capture this moment with my camera or is my smartphone sufficient?"

While the CM1's 1-inch (13.2 x 8.8mm) sensor is not as big as those found in Four Thirds (17.3 x 13mm), APS-C (23.6 x 15.7mm) or full frame (36.0 x 24.0mm) cameras, it is significantly larger than the average smartphone sensor – including the iPhone 6 with its 4.8 x 3.6mm sensor and the Samsung S6 with its 5.8 x 4.0mm sensor. Generally speaking, larger sensors should be less susceptible to noise at high ISO settings.



The MOS sensor in the CM1 is capable of capturing 20-megapixel stills (JPEG and RAW) and 4K video (3840 x 2160 pixels) at 30 frames per second.

The ring on the lens barrel can be used to control aperture, shutter speed, ISO, white balance, exposure compensation or focus. There's also a 4.7-inch 6,220,000-dot monitor on the back of the device and a dedicated shutter button on the top deck. A slider switches between camera and smartphone operation.

The DMC-CM1 is built around a Qualcomm 2.3GHz quad-core processor and uses Android 5.0 Lollipop operating system. It is available now with a retail price of \$1,399.

Z E1 action camera with MFT lenses

Z Camera, a China-based camera startup, has unveiled plans to manufacture the E1, a GoPro competitor that's compatible with Micro Four Thirds lenses.

The E1 launched on crowdfunding platform Kickstarter with a funding goal of \$42,000 but raised in excess of \$270,000.

The camera is built around a 16-megapixel CMOS sensor and can shoot video at 4K (4096x2160/24p) resolution. The manufacturers describe the camera as, "the smallest 4K ultra-high definition camera with an interchangeable-lens system."

The E1 will retail for US\$699 (body only) and is expected to begin shipping to Kickstarter supporters in November.



Cokin filters to take 'nuanced' approach

Cokin says its new lineup of Nuances neutral density (ND) filters are free of colour casts and are able to block infrared light. ND filters reduce the amount of light entering the lens, and are often used by photographers to achieve slower shutter speeds and reduce depth of field. The strongest filter in the range, the ND1024, produces a 10-stop reduction in available light, while the mildest, the ND2, produces a one-stop reduction. The filters are available in six densities: ND2, ND4, ND8, ND32, ND256 and ND1024.

The filters have been designed to fit Cokin's Creative filter-holders, from M to XL sizes. The L size is compatible with standard matte boxes using 100 x 100mm filters. ND32, ND256 and ND1024 filters in L and XL sizes come with a foam mask that can be inserted between the filter and filter-holder to prevent light leaks.

Epson launches SC-P800 A2+ photo printer

Epson has launched the SureColor SC-P800 A2+ photo printer in Australia. Successor to the popular Stylus Pro 3880, the new large-format printer is aimed at professional and advanced amateur photographers.

The P800 incorporates the same print-head and LUT technology as the Stylus Pro 3880 but with the Ultrachrome HD inkset, which debuted with the smaller SC-P600 A3+ earlier this year. The P800 uses large 80ml cartridges to reduce cost per print. Epson says the nine-colour inkset offers a large colour gamut with the highest Dmax of any comparable A2 printer.

The SC-P800 supports WiFi, Apple Airprint, and Google Cloud Print connectivity and includes a 2.7-inch colour touch panel with gesture control. There's a large multi-sheet rear tray as well as a new front paper path for fine art media. An optional roll paper unit can be attached, giving support for rolls in widths from 13 to 17 inches to enable long panoramic prints and operation with a range of speciality media stocks.

The printer ships with ColorBase2, for colour calibration with a range of common spectrometers, and Epson Print

Layout which works with photo editing software including Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom and Nikon ViewNX-i for fast and flexible formatting. Graphics and photos can be formatted for printing either as a single image or as a compound image using a range of pre-designed templates and custom settings. Colour can also be adjusted to suit different presentation styles and there is an advanced black & white mode for professional work.

The SureColor SC-P800 also offers soft proofing, supports custom media registration and incorporates a Gallery Wrap mode with a range of edge settings to suit images that need to be frame mounted. The P-800 is available now with a retail price of \$2195.





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Prashphutita
A. Greco

Q&A

AP answers your photographic queries

Photoshop, Lightroom or something else?

Q I'm thinking about buying post-processing software like Lightroom or Photoshop, or some other program. As I mainly like to take landscape shots I'm not sure which program to get. Which one is the best and easiest to use?

Malcolm Way, Picnic Point, NSW.

A This is a big subject, and a difficult question to answer! Much depends on your personal preferences, your style of working, as well as what you need to achieve.

Photoshop remains the default "industry standard" for pre-press, graphic design, and working professional photographers who require pixel-level editing capabilities. However, that doesn't necessarily mean it's the "best" for your purposes. It can be used for 3D production, video editing, and other functions which might not be applicable for your requirements, and only serve to clutter the interface, making it harder to access what you really need.

On the other hand, "easiest" usually requires a program to be purpose-designed and built for a specific use. An example is XnView image viewer (which also has some editing capabilities). In this program the GUI is designed so that the most-commonly performed tasks require the minimum number of keystrokes; zooming an image can be achieved by the mouse wheel, etc.

Another thing to consider is whether you want to be locked in to a particular program, which involves a given company and the way that you're made to fit in to their way of thinking and doing things. Recently, the users of iPhoto have been forced onto the new Photos for OS X. And professionals using Aperture have



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been abandoned, with many of them choosing to go with Adobe Lightroom. Has everyone been able to successfully migrate their catalogues, containing all their edits and other work? Lightroom, and similar programs, work their magic by creating and maintaining a catalogue (a proprietary database).

Lightroom is a very comprehensive and versatile program. It covers all the aspects of digital imaging from start to finish, from transferring images from your camera's memory card, to editing and adjustments, keywords ("tagging"), image management and organisation, printing, and sharing (uploading to various online services). It continues to improve and it handles more of the tasks which once required a "round-trip" to Photoshop. For instance, the latest Lightroom CC ("Creative Cloud" – the ongoing subscription-based model) and Lightroom 6 now have HDR (High Dynamic Range) Merge and Panorama Merge tools, both of which can be useful to enthusiasts. Photoshop has the

steepest learning curve of all: it's powerful but not what I'd call "easy". Lightroom is more user friendly. There are dozens of other programs worth considering. Doing an online search for "Photoshop alternative" or "Lightroom alternative" (without the quotes) will give you a quick indication of these possibilities.

Try: <http://alternativeto.net> which has alternatives to many different kinds of software.

Some image editors you might wish to consider would include:

ACDSee Pro; BreezeBrowser; Corel AfterShot Pro (previously Bibble); Corel PaintShop Pro (I recall using early versions of this over two decades ago, as well as a more modern version); and DarkTable, a Lightroom challenger.

For Mac OS X, FreeBSD or various Linux distributions think about: DxO OpticsPro; Affinity Pro; FastPictureViewer Pro; FastStone Image Viewer; Gimpshop; LightZone; Paint.NET; Photo Commander, by Ashampoo;

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RIGHT

Sometimes, computer glitches are enough to make you want to resort to drastic measures!



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PhotoFiltre; PhotoLine; Photoshop Elements (a cut-down version of Photoshop, with the professional features locked-out behind a friendlier interface); Pixia; Raw Therapee (Windows, Mac, Linux, now free & open source software. Good if you're dealing with a more limited number of RAW images and don't require organising capabilities).

Note that there are also various online image editors available for use free of charge, such as Photoshop Express, although that may not be the way you'd want to go (it doesn't suit me).

You could get a quick "feel" for how each program looks, and what it's like to work with, from watching videos on YouTube (which is a time-efficient strategy).

Due to their popularity, Lightroom and Photoshop do have the most training resources available to users. You'll need time to familiarise yourself with whatever you choose so you can devise a workflow which suits you.

No thumbnails for RAW images

Q I recently began shooting with RAW. Originally I worked with RAW + JPEG, which gave me a JPEG and a CR2 thumbnail in my Windows Pictures folders. Now I shoot straight RAW (due to file size on my new Canon EOS 70D) and I only get a thumbnail which shows the CR2 and no image. This means I have to individually open each thumbnail to see which picture it is. I download from my camera into Windows Pictures. Is there any way I can do this so I can

get a thumbnail and I can see the photo without opening the CR2 files one at a time? I'm currently processing my images in Lightroom 5.

Graeme Barnes, Rutherford, NSW.

A A RAW file already contains an embedded JPEG, produced by the camera (for thumbnail and preview purposes, or to be extracted later, for example using Michael Tapes' Instant JPEG From RAW (IJFR), <http://michaeltapesdesign.com/instant-jpeg-from-raw.html>).

It's the Windows Operating System that is lacking the appropriate Codec (Coder/Decoder) for your specific model of camera. Do you have the latest version of Windows?

A Canon EOS 70D CR2 RAW sample image can be successfully displayed in Windows Explorer on my system, which is running Windows 7 Ultimate. One solution is to buy the Codec Pack from Axel Rietschin, developer of the program FastPictureViewer – www.fastpictureviewer.com.

This, from the website: "The FastPictureViewer Codec Pack is a Windows extension adding support


for many additional image formats to Windows Explorer and codec-enabled applications... The FastPictureViewer Codec Pack adds fast thumbnail and preview support to Microsoft Windows for many image formats, including RAW formats from more than 580 digital cameras..."

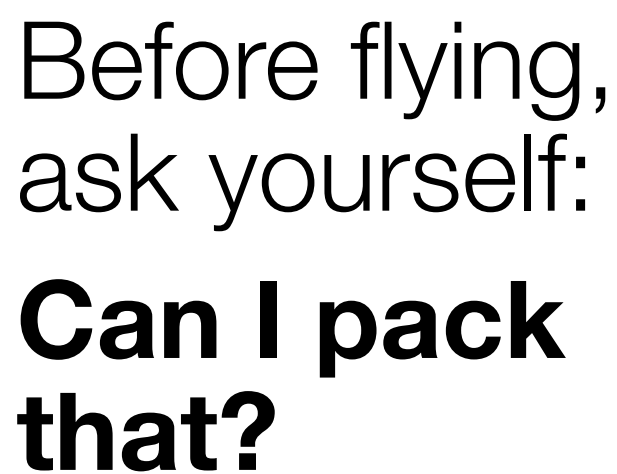
I should note, I like to use FastPictureViewer program for "first-cull editing", choosing those pictures I want to keep, including those which may require some post-processing work. However, Windows Explorer is something I generally avoid, for many reasons. For navigating directories (with a familiar appearance, and in a manner similar to Windows Explorer), image browsing and/or editing, or batch-converting, I'd recommend you use XnView, by Pierre E. Gougelet – www.xnview.com/en/xnview

Depending on your needs, there are Minimal, Standard, and Extended (with all Plug-ins and Add-ons, as well as Extras) versions of this versatile, regularly updated program (all are free for non-commercial use). This will allow you to "see" what's inside the RAW file, without first opening each file. Note, too, that you can customise the GUI (Graphical User Interface). A nice touch is that there's a comprehensive range of user-configurable options. One example of something which I find useful is to have the program launch its browser with the last used folder. Another example, having individual tabs for various images (those which you are comparing), is very helpful as you can quickly toggle through those, then back to the browser, with *Ctrl-Tab*.

I've used this program for well over a decade. Of course, if you're using Lightroom 5 to import images it can generate proxy files as previews and store them. However, this requires a lot of processing power (even more so if the previews are at full resolution), and can take a long time (potentially hours, depending on your system) if you're bringing in thousands of pictures! 🌟

What's your question?

Photography got you stumped? If you have a query about your camera, computer, software or anything photography related, please email our correspondent Prashphutita Greco at qanda@australianphotography.com. Please include your question, along with your name, suburb, state and phone number. Prashphutita will try to get back to you with an answer within a couple of weeks. 



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Darran Leal

In the desert

In one of the driest and most barren regions on the planet **Darran Leal** discovered some amazing scenes, including an abandoned ship!



I love shooting in deserts. They're so wild and creatively clean, yet challenging from the conception of the image to its completion. Then you have the actual environmental issues. I've experienced everything in deserts; sand, dust, heat, sub-zero cold – even snow! I've woken up after a blustery night completely covered in sand. I dusted myself off, my camera bag protected by an outer bag, and I was off again to shoot new images. Namibia's Sossusvlei region, the Sahara, Death Valley, Mongolia, and the Australian outback offer some of my favourite deserts. And you shouldn't forget the polar deserts!



I love shooting sand dunes. Next year I plan to tackle new locations that were only recently opened to travellers, like some parts of the Namibian desert. We'll drive up and down massive sand dunes, hundreds of feet high, and through arid lands which no cameras have photographed before. We'll get a bit of dust and sand, but what fantastic photo opportunities!

Modern equipment handles this type of diversity well. If you've never photographed a sand dune you can look forward to magic lines and patterns and some great creative angles, despite the often sand-filled winds. You must make sure you carry adequate protection for

your equipment, because sand is a real camera killer. But, if it's calm and quiet, don't be shy to get down low, put on your widest lens (or perhaps your longest one) and aim to push yourself beyond your traditional interests and comfort levels. The rewards can be stunning, and you'll shoot images which you'll enjoy for the rest of your life. 🌟

Darran Leal has worked as a professional photographer since 1989. Along with his wife Julia he owns and operates World Photo Adventures offering guided photo tours to some of the most photogenic locations in the world. Find out more at worldphotoadventures.com.au 

ABOVE

You don't expect to find ships in the desert, but it does occur surprisingly frequently in Namibia, on Africa's rugged and isolated southwest coast. Canon 5D Mk III, 16-35mm lens @ 16mm, 1/350s @ f/11, ISO 400, hand held. Processed in Lightroom.

OPPOSITE

Deadvlei (Namibia) offers huge iconic sand dunes and unique 800-year-old mummified trees. There is tremendous diversity in deserts, and I can't wait to go back in 2016! Canon 5D Mk III, 200-400mm lens @ 232mm, 1/750s @ f/8, ISO 400, handheld, aperture priority. Processed in Lightroom.

Your best shot **Flowers**

This month's challenge, 'flowers', proved to be one of our most popular. From a strong list of entries we picked this final line up, which illustrated some different approaches and some good creative thinking.

WINNER

PHOTOGRAPHER

**Judy
McEachern**

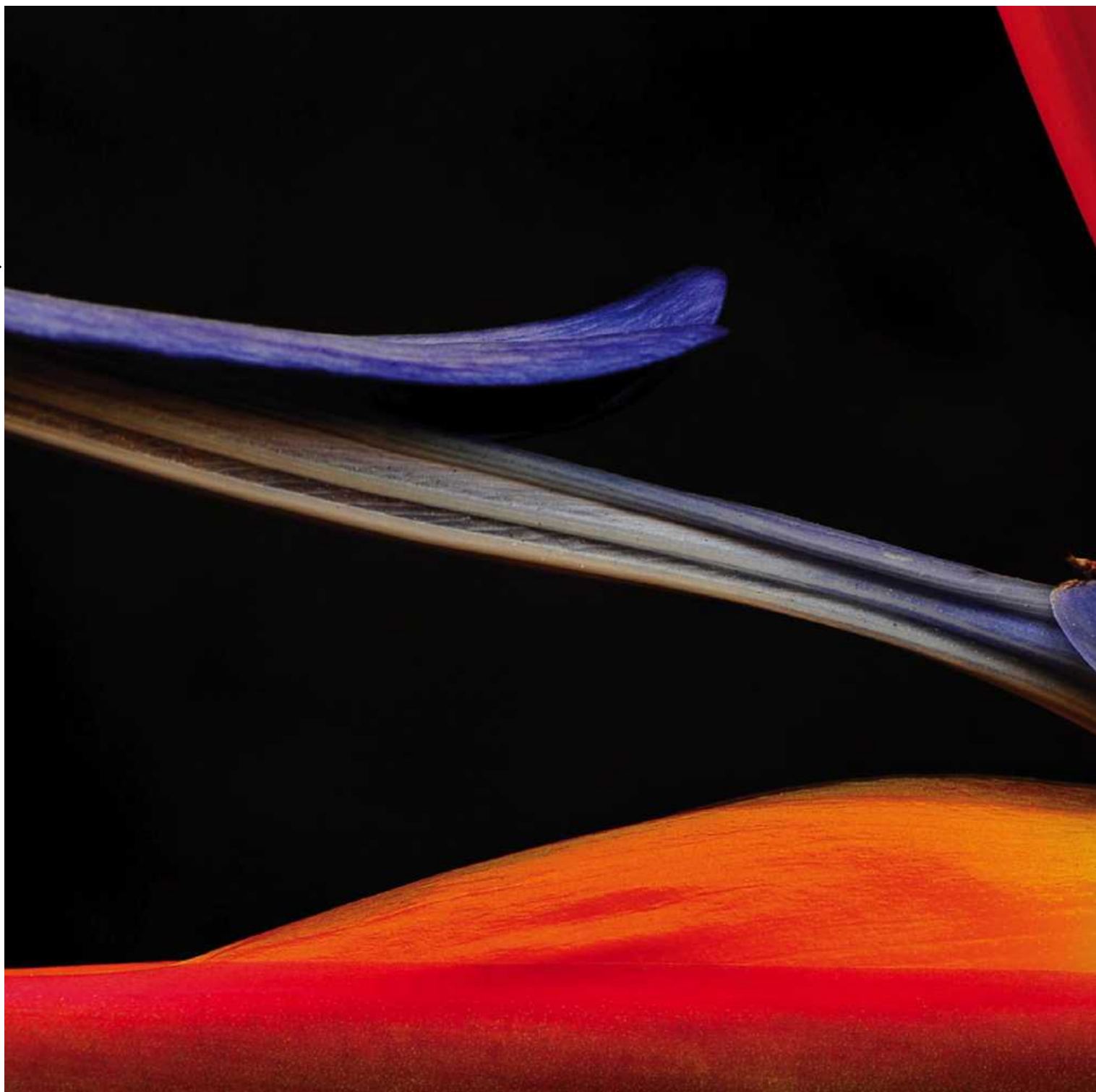
EDITOR'S COMMENT

Judie McEachern says, "I have always loved the textures of flowers and I have been taking abstract images of their amazing colours and shapes for some time. With the purchase of my dedicated macro lens I was able to capture the simplicity and dramatic shape of this Bird of Paradise flower."

Judy certainly succeeded in her aims here. By going for a semi-abstract composition, she has used shape and line, contrasting with the black background, to really emphasise the strong lines of the flower. The colour works powerfully here as well, which we felt created a pleasing overall composition. Well done!

DETAILS

Nikon 700D, Nikkor 105mm macro lens, 1/10s @ f/16, ISO 200, polarising filter. Taken outdoors using natural light with a black background. Slight cropping, spotting, contrast and sharpening in Photoshop.





HIGHLY COMMENDED

PHOTOGRAPHER

Deborah Jordan

EDITOR'S COMMENT

We liked the ambience of the light in this photo of wildflowers from a reserve in South Africa. While hiking in the Suikerbos Reserve south of Johannesburg, Deborah Jordan says it was drizzling on and off the whole morning when she came across a patch of wildflowers showing up through the Highveld savannah grass. Shooting from a distance she has blurred both the foreground and background to nicely isolate these delicate flowers. You could suggest they've been over-sharpened, but arguably not enough to damage the overall impact of this scene.

DETAILS

Canon 6D, Canon 100-400mm, 1/2500s @ f/5.6, manual, ISO 1250, hand-held. Curves and levels. Cropped and sharpened.



HIGHLY COMMENDED

PHOTOGRAPHER

Nicole Bechaz

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Nicole Bechaz tells us, "I took this handheld shot of a rose with water drops in my backyard. It was towards the end of the day when the sun was about to go down." Good use of atmospheric lighting and the clever shooting of water droplets is what captured our interest in this unusual image. The

side-on view was also a standout amongst so many images composed from front-on, and we thought this made this shot a worthy finalist.

DETAILS

Nikon D7100, 105mm lens @ 105mm, 1/500s @ f/11.0, ISO 320.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ánika Warren-Smith

HOW I DID IT

I walked past this drooping eucalyptus every day while doing the school run and the flowers were just beautiful. I think the gumnuts are very striking with the white details against the bright pink of the flowers. The rainbow lorikeets love them too! I collected this little sample which was hanging over the footpath to bring them home and shoot them with my macro lens.

DETAILS

Canon 450D, EF 100mm f/2.8 macro USM, 1/160s @ f/10, ISO 1600, on tripod. Cropping, minor brightening and exposure adjustments in Aperture.





PHOTOGRAPHER

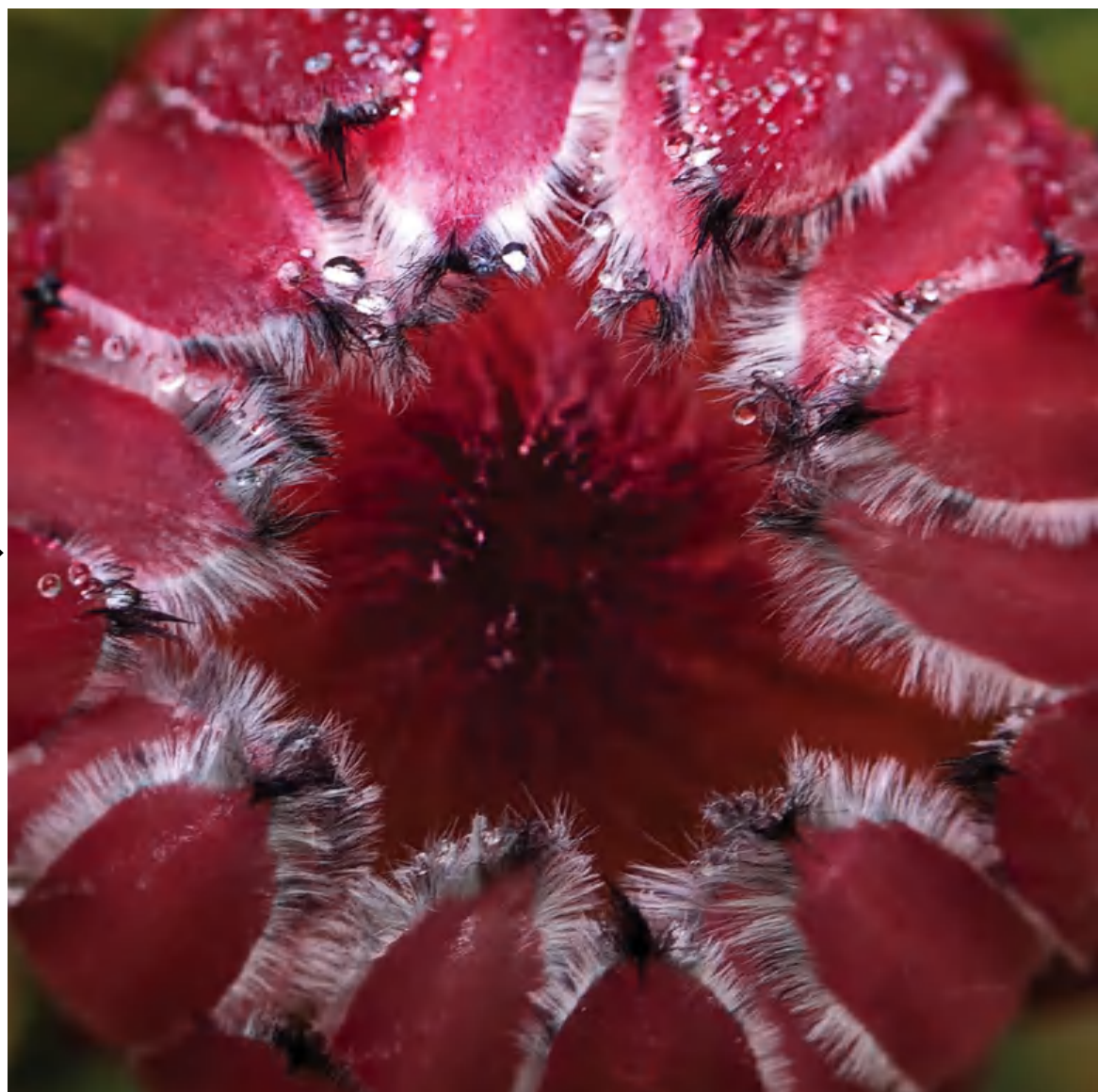
Annette Brauer

HOW I DID IT

Every time I drive past a scene where there has been a fatality and people leave flowers as a sign of their grief, I think of how fragile life can be. I wanted to portray this expression of grief in my image showing all the floral tributes and the car lights as they pass by. I set up my camera on a tripod and using a cable release I took several images as the cars passed. Two of these were merged to give the effect of more than one set of tail lights.

DETAILS

Canon EOS 700D, 18-135mm IS
Canon lens @ 19mm, 6 seconds
@ f/8, ISO 100, Manfrotto tripod.



PHOTOGRAPHER

Bevellee Bryceson

HOW I DID IT

I love doing macro shots so I waited patiently for this protea to open. It was in an awkward position so I didn't use a tripod.

DETAILS

Canon 5D Mk II, Canon 100mm f/2.8 IS USM macro lens, 1/60s @ f/8, ISO 400. Image converted from RAW, Clarity slider used to sharpen image.

YOUR BEST SHOT



← PHOTOGRAPHER

**Diane
Foley**

HOW I DID IT

This image was shot in the Botanical Gardens in Bundaberg, Queensland.

DETAILS

Nikon D750, Nikon 18-140mm lens, DX crop setting @ 116mm focal length. 1/250s @ f/6.3, ISO 400, -3 EV compensation.

→ PHOTOGRAPHER

Janice Amato

HOW I DID IT

I took this shot for a macro competition for my local camera club. I had the rose in a vase on my kitchen bench and I used the available light coming from the kitchen window. I'm not good at using my macro lens so I thought I'd give it a try and I was quite happy with how it turned out. I love taking any sorts of shots, but I find macro is one of the hardest categories. I know in flower photography you're supposed to use unblemished flowers, but there was something about this that I liked. In Photoshop I did a little contrast and levels and cropped a lot out of it. I also put slight vignetting around the image.

DETAILS

Canon EOS 7D, 60mm Canon macro lens, 60mm focal length, 1/4s @ f/9, tripod.





PHOTOGRAPHER

Danielle Thompson

HOW I DID IT

My family and I were taking a walk around the streets of Parkdale in Melbourne when I came across a few of these purple daisies on a nature strip. My kids wanted to pick them, but I managed to stop them just in time and instead got in close with my 50mm lens and take a photo. I loved how the orange pollen seemed to pop from the centre. The kids were happy with the shot.

DETAILS

Canon 6D, 50mm lens, 1/1250s @ f2/5, ISO 640. Highlights, shadows, cropping, vibrance, clarity and sharpening.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Cindy Blacker

HOW I DID IT

The raised flower bed and a cloudy sky provided the opportunity for me to get a different perspective on these Hyacinths. I did have a tripod with me, but I couldn't get down low enough to make the shot I was looking for so I resorted to laying my camera on the ground. This meant I had to use an automatic focus and take several shots without using the viewfinder to frame it up. I used a Canon Speedlight on the camera to light up the Hyacinths. After quite a few attempts to get it right, I was happy with this result.

DETAILS

Canon EOS 5D Mk III, Canon 24-105mm @ 24mm, 1/200s @ f/16, ISO 100.



YOUR BEST SHOT

How to enter

Your Best Shot is open to AP subscribers and APS members. To enter an image in the comp, check the competition themes and instructions below and email your best image to yourbestshot@australianphotography.com 

UPCOMING COMPETITION THEMES

NOVEMBER ISSUE TECHNOLOGY

Deadline: Aug 31, 2015

DECEMBER ISSUE CLOSE UP/MACRO

Deadline: Sept 30, 2015

JANUARY ISSUE HEIGHT

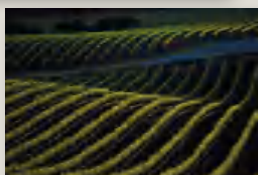
Deadline: Oct 31, 2015

FEBRUARY ISSUE LINES

Deadline: Nov 30, 2015

MARCH ISSUE HEAT

Deadline: Dec 10, 2015



EMAIL DETAILS

- Send your entry to yourbestshot@australianphotography.com
- Include the name of the competition theme you are entering in the email subject line, for example 'Rain' or 'Abstract'.
- Please include the following details with your entry: your name, image title (if there is one) and 100-200 words about how you created your image. Please also include technical details including camera, lens, focal length, shutter speed, aperture, filter (if used), tripod (if used) and details of any software manipulation.
- Entries may be submitted up to midnight on the evening of the specified deadline.

IMAGE REQUIREMENTS

- Images must be saved in JPEG format.
- Ideal image size is between 30 and 42cm (on the longest edge) at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). A JPEG compression of 9/12 (or 75%) will keep images to an acceptable email size without noticeably reducing image quality.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- To enter, you must be a subscriber to *Australian Photography + digital* or be a member of the Australian Photographic Society (APS). See inside for subscription offers.
- The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Employees of Yaffa Publishing (and freelance contributors) are not eligible to win the prize.
- Submitted images must have been taken no more than 24 months before the competition deadline.
- The prize is subject to change without notification.
- You must have an Australian street address to be eligible to win the prize.
- By entering you grant Yaffa Publishing the right to publish your image in *Australian Photography + digital* and at www.australianphotography.com for the purposes of promoting the *Your Best Shot* competition. Copyright remains the property of the photographer.

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Perfect perspective



Capturing the perfect photo is all about homing in on the best perspective, writes Anthony McKee. He explains the finer points and shows you how to gauge the strength of a scene from different angles.



I have always considered photography to be a dance. Seriously! Whenever I pick up the camera and approach a subject I know there is usually just one viewpoint from where the subject, the background and other significant elements in the environment come together to create the perfect photo. Finding that perspective involves walking around the subject, moving forward and back, and gauging the strength of the scene from different angles. When I find that place, making the photo usually becomes the easy part of the process.

Of course the tempo of the dance is determined by the subject. If I'm stuck in a studio or wandering a landscape at noon there's usually no rush to find the right viewpoint. But if I'm photographing a wedding or portrait, or even a dynamic commercial or editorial situation, then things move a bit faster. Often as I move the subjects and myself around in search of the best perspective, I joke that we are doing the photographer's waltz, but I also know that the right perspective is critical to a good photograph.

Some of you might be thinking that the search for perspective is just an occasional trick that professional photographers use to improve an image, but the fact is, perspective is everything. Regardless of light and moment, if you're in the wrong place for a photo, nothing else matters. And it's a process that's more complex than you might think. Putting aside light, which most experienced photographers know can be managed and manipulated in a variety of ways, finding the right perspective for a photograph can be a complex and engaging process.

Unlimited options

To appreciate just how many options there are in any shooting situation, imagine a checker board, the 8 x 8 board you play checkers or chess on. Imagine that this is a big checker board

ABOVE & OPPOSITE

We can get close enough to most subjects, man or mountain, to manage the perspective in the image. There are some exceptions though, like a full moon. In this scene the moon was just starting to rise as I was making a photo of this Alberrie Creek artwork on the Oodnadatta Track, SA. The first photo (left) was made with a 30mm equivalent lens, but after I noticed the moon rising I realised there was a more interesting photo if I moved back about 100m and made the photo with a telephoto lens. This photo was made with an 80-200mm lens set to about 150mm. Ideally I would have liked to have used a longer lens so that I could have made the moon appear even larger in the image, but there was a problem with this plan. Because I was slow to realise the moon was rising, and not fast at running 100 or so metres across stony terrain, the moon was too high in the sky to include both it and the aircraft. This is where good planning comes into play! Given another chance I would have the line and the length of the shot planned out before moonrise so as to be ready for the photograph.

with each square being one metre wide. Now, for argument's sake, put this checkerboard on a location like Bondi Beach, that iconic strip of sand on Sydney's coast. Imagine a portrait subject is standing in the centre of this board, and as you walk around all 64 squares on the board, the subject keeps turning to face you. Start by imagining you're walking around the four most central squares. As you move from one square to another you are literally walking 360-degrees around your subject. At just one metre from the subject you can make the portrait with a wide-angle lens and at the same time encompass a lot of the background. From one square you will have the sea in the background, in another you will be looking along the beach towards other bathers. From the third square you're looking up towards the apartments and one

HOW TO Master Perspective



end of the beach, and in the last square you will be looking in the direction of cliffs at the other end. In all of these shots the wide-angle lens is going to make the background appear rather distant and the subject will appear rather close, although this is not a big concern, particularly if you're taking a story-telling approach to the image.

Having walked around the subject on those four most central squares, now step one metre back onto the next ring of squares. You now have 12 squares in this ring that you can walk around, and each square will again give you a different perspective. You have now doubled your distance away from the subject, and you have a choice; you can continue to use the wide-angle lens, although the subject will be half their original size in your frame while the background will actually maintain the same appearance. As an option, you can double the focal length of the lens (perhaps to a "normal" lens) and make your subject appear about the same size in the frame as they did in your original photos. Of course, in doing this you will include less of the background, although it will now appear closer. The important thing to consider for now is that you are still near the middle of the checkerboard, and yet you have already explored 28 different perspective options for this photograph, including 16 options with the wide-angle lens, and 12 with the normal lens.

If you step back another metre there is a ring of 20 squares and if we step back another metre again (to the edge of the board) there are 28 squares around the perimeter. From these 48 squares you could make photos using the wide-angle lens, a normal lens or a short telephoto lens. That gives you 144

LEFT AND RIGHT

An understanding of perspective can be useful, particularly when you want to try and convey a sense of scale to a scene. These two images of kayakers at the foot of the Serena Glacier in Patagonia were photographed from another kayak on the lagoon. In the photo on the right I used a 20mm wide-angle lens to capture as much of the scene as possible. Because I was just a few metres away from the other kayakers, and they were

about 200 metres in front of the glacier, they appear moderately large in the picture while at the same time we can include a lot of the surrounding landscape. In the second photo I wanted to convey the difference in size between the ice face and our kayaks. To do this I used a 300mm telephoto lens from a distance of about 100 metres back from the glacier while our kayak guide paddled within 20 metres of the ice face.

perspective options and if you add that to those 28 options from near the middle of this playing board, that's 172 options that we have from an eight-by-eight metre square!

But wait, there's more! One variable we have not considered is the height of the camera. At every position on the checker board you can choose to have the camera low, at eye-level or high (standing on a small step ladder). Add that to the mix and there are 516 perspective options, all from this one situation.

Line and length

Perspective is more than just an exercise in aesthetics. For experienced reportage and documentary photographers, along with many clever advertising and illustrative photographers, finding the right perspective often has more to do with psychology and how an audience will interpret a photograph.

Let's take a closer look at what is actually happening in the checkerboard exercise. For a start, as we walk around the subject we're looking for a visual line which connects the subject with a relevant background. In the Bondi Beach example we had the choice of including the sea, the cliffs, other people on the beach or the apartments on the hill; as a photographer, you have to decide what background is most relevant to the story you want to tell. Remember, in some instances you might want to include more than just one element of the background, like the beach and the apartments.

Having found the line, the next step is to consider the length of the shot, as in the distances between your camera, your subject and the background. In many instances the length of a photograph can be paired with your choice of lens for the photograph, but don't assume this is always the case; photographers who make this mistake are often the ones who become transfixed on a single element within the photograph, and fail to see other opportunities in the scene, or the bigger picture. A more important consideration is the apparent sizes of the various elements in the photograph, and how making one element larger or smaller than another within the frame might affect the significance of a photo.

With the Bondi Beach exercise we started off just one metre away from our subject and at that distance the subject dominated in the scene. We then moved back to four metres away and this move made the subject appear around a quarter of the original size. At the same time, the background, which for argument's sake might have been 100 metres away, hardly changed at all.



HOW TO Master Perspective

RIGHT AND OPPOSITE

Perspective is not a tool to be pulled out when you're stuck for ideas; it's a fundamental consideration which photographers should apply to every photo. Here are a couple of images of writer Andy Griffiths entertaining a group of children at the recent Willy Lit Fest (Williamstown Literary Festival) in Melbourne. Both photos were made from the same line and the same length – in other words, the same location. The difference is that for one photo I got down low to include the heads of the children and I used a telephoto lens to make Andy appear large in the photo (right). In the other photo (opposite) I put the camera on a monopod, put a 20mm lens on the camera, and then held the monopod and camera above my head while the self timer captured the photo. Same location, two very different images.

The four 'L's

Finding the right perspective for an image can be easy when you break it down into four simple steps that I'll call the 'Four Ls' - Line, Length, Lens and eLevation. Here's how it works.

- **Line:** Walk around the subject and explore the best line from which to make the image. As you walk around, look at the relationship between the subject and background, along with any other supporting elements that might help (or hinder) the image. Look for visual symbolisms and icons in the background, but also be aware of any potential distractions you might want to eliminate, including distracting highlights or those poles and branches that can grow out of people's heads!
- **Length:** Having found the perfect line, give some thought to the length of the shot, as in the distances between you, the subject, the background and any other key elements within the photograph. As you vary these distances you can dramatically change the scale and relationship between the main elements within the photo.
- **Lens:** Regardless of the line and the length you settle on for an image, the lens choice is still a unique decision which needs consideration in its own right. The lens choice is not going to change the overall relationships of scale between the different elements within your photos, but it does determine how you crop your final vision. While it's possible to dramatically change the scale of some objects and backgrounds in a photograph simply by moving in closer or further away, there are subjects where sometimes choosing a wide lens or a telephoto is your only option for adjusting scale. One such object is the moon, which will only ever appear bigger in a photo if you use a longer lens. And then there are those wide cavernous vistas such as the Grand Canyon or the inside of cathedrals where you're only likely to share the story if you use a wide-angle lens.
- **Elevation:** The last of the 'L's is elevation – the height your camera is off the ground as you make the image. Outdoors, getting the camera low to the ground will allow you to include textures like grass or rocks in an image, while in urban situations getting low might let you include objects on a table or feet on a street. Getting low can also place your subject on the horizon line, which is rather useful if you're trying to eliminate other visual clutter from a photo. Alternatively, putting the camera up high, even by just one or two metres, can help show the scale of a landscape and the distance relationships between subjects and surroundings.



In just a few metres we made a noticeable change to the scale and relationship between our foreground subject and the background.

Now, if we were to move back 100 metres, all of a sudden our subject is lost in the crowd and the buildings and structures that were 100 metres away are now 200 metres away. These buildings will now appear half the size they were a moment earlier. If we ask our subject to come and stand one metre in front of us again, we have made them dominant again, and yet we have made the background smaller. And if we ask our subject to move back another metre, they are in proportion again with the background as it was in our original photo. Moving our camera forwards or backwards along the line, and even moving the subject forward or backwards, changes the apparent size of elements and their significance within the photograph.

The choice of lens for the photograph does not actually control the relationships of size within a photograph; all a lens does is control the field-of-view. Of course, this is important too. If we use a wide-angle lens for the photograph we capture lots of the environment surrounding the subject; if we zoom in with a telephoto lens we are removing a lot of that background clutter and instead concentrating our attention on the key elements.

As you keep cropping in with a lens there is one really useful rule of thumb worth knowing: if you double the distance between you and a subject, you can actually double the focal length of the lens to keep the subject roughly the same size in your viewfinder. A subject photographed at one metre with a 24mm lens will occupy a similar area of the frame as the same subject shot at two metres with a 50mm lens, four metres with a 100mm lens, eight metres with a 200mm lens, 16 metres with a 400mm lens and so on.



This becomes useful when you're trying to photograph a subject against a background that you are never going to get close to, like a full-moon rising at sunset. The only way to make the moon look large in a photograph is to put on a long lens, but if you want to include other elements in the photograph, you will need to move backwards to include them in the photo too. If you are photographing a model against a moonrise, chances are you might need to move back 20 metres or more to include them in the photo. If you want to make a city skyline look good against the moonrise, you will need to move back several kilometres. And this is where many experienced photographers understand the importance of planning the line and length of a photograph. When you're working in kilometres, you want to be certain you have clear lines and achievable lengths for the photo, otherwise you could be scrambling to try and find the right location for a shot.

Working elevation

Having determined the line, the length and lens for the shot, one final element to think about is elevation. Most photographers usually make photos at eye level and often forget to get low or get high with the camera, and yet these options can dramatically change the context of a photograph. Getting low can do a variety of things, from bringing textures into the picture, to eliminating visual clutter from the foreground and background. Alternatively, getting the camera up higher, even if it is only by a metre or two can help add scale to a scene. Your decision to photograph a subject from a low level, eye level or a high level can also imply psychological or social attitudes towards that subject. Looking up at someone or something is to put them on a pedestal, to look

down is to think less of them while to look at someone, including a child, from eye-level is to treat them as an equal. The elevation of the camera gives you the choice of treating someone as a hero or a victim; or making a landscape tactile or spacious.

A game or a dance?

The checkerboard exercise is a simple example of just how many potential perspective options there are within any one situation. What is even more important to remember though, is that this idea does not just apply to portraiture; it applies to nearly every genre of photography, from macro images on a table top, where a few millimetres can make a big difference to a photo, through to landscape and aerial photography where one or two kilometres – or in some cases 50 kilometres – can dramatically change a photograph for the better.

The important part about all of this though, is that it really does remind us of the scale and potential of any given shooting situation. Of course, every photographer will approach these situations in their own unique way. Many photographers will plan out the line and length of every photo they take, while other photographers will simply rely on serendipity; that luck of walking around a corner to see a great scene on a day when they just happen to have their camera with them. But for photographers like me, there are also those dynamic situations where the music is happening, the crowd is moving and you need to be constantly moving as well to find the important elements within the scene. I am still looking for the line, length, the lens and the elevation within the photograph. But when everything is moving around, that's when it feels more like a dance for me. 🌀

Choose your heroes

Being able to identify your best images is one of the most important skills in photography. Wildlife and landscape photographer **Darran Leal** explains how he chooses his 'hero' images – the shots that lead his photo essays.

How do you go about choosing your best images? Strange as it may sound, finding your 'hero' images can be harder than you'd imagine. As photographers we can't help making emotional connections to our subjects and that can have a distorting effect on the way we see and assess our photos. Take for example a photo of a small child. While the mother or father of the child are likely to relate to the photo on a purely emotional level, other viewers are more likely to respond to factors like lighting, composition, colour, etc. That's a rather extreme example, but any photographer who has put together a portfolio, photo essay or exhibition will tell you that being able to sort your images into some sort of hierarchy, knowing 'what goes with what', and which images to leave out, is actually one of the most important and undervalued skills a photographer can have.



China has some of the most amazing landscapes on the planet. This scene was very hot and humid, offering us special atmospheric conditions. Canon 5D Mk III, 24-70mm lens @ 50mm, 1/180s @ f/11, ISO 200. Multi-shot panorama, hand held. B&W conversion, contrast, blacks, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5, stitched together in Photoshop.

And it's not easy! So, how do you improve the way you go about sorting, organising and rating your images? The following tips outline my own approach, developed over 30 years as a photographer, and photography teacher. I hope you can put it to work to create compelling portfolios and photo essays of your own.

01 Get Organised

For me, focusing on defining my best work is the key for organising my 'hero' images as quickly as possible. I sort my images from a day's shoot each evening, while I have the excitement of the experience in my mind. Downloading and sorting usually takes me about 20 to 30 minutes, no more. I don't shoot large numbers of images – generally around 50 to 300 in any full day in the field. However, another photographer beside me might shoot double that amount, or even triple! It's a very

personal choice in our exploration of this creative art form.

Importantly, before downloading and sorting, I have started to define images for quality as I shoot. I memorise the opportunities that I think could offer a unique result. As an example, in Morocco last November, halfway through our tour, we started one day with a sunrise over the Sahara Desert, then we shot a traditional Bedouin camp and its people, then we saw some amazing fossils, and we finished that day with a shoot at an ancient adobe village. It was a diverse series of subjects in one day, but I can still remember the stand-out shooting opportunities – the images that stood out for me, as distinct from being mere snapshots. I'm not hung up on technicalities. I'm more concerned about whether an image is eye catching, or if it has a particular use in a project I'm doing. While technical correctness can be important to help

HOW TO Pick Your Best Images



ABOVE

The Flinders Ranges offers great landscapes and iconic outback shoots. This shot is an iconic Aussie outback image. Canon 5D Mk III, 70-200mm lens @ 200mm, 1/750s @ f/8, ISO 400, hand held. Vibrance, contrast, shadows, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.

you pick your best image, how important is creativity? Does the image need to be sharp? Does a landscape need to work in thirds? What about that leading line? They can be important points for defining your best work in some images and in other images, perhaps not.

Remember, the most important point is that you like it. I rarely bother thinking about whether others will like a particular shot. But I will consider some images for specific jobs. This could be for use in a particular magazine. I rarely enter photo competitions, but if I do, I make sure that any such images are clearly marked in my filing system and easy to find.

This flows on to downloading and it finishes with sorting and rating my images in the field. When I'm on a tour I download my images into one folder per tour, or country, each day. This year I have created a King Island folder for our tour there. I am also visiting Guatemala and Cuba so I am creating a folder for each country. The images are in date order, organised by simply dropping them into the folder, so it's easy to manually backtrack through and find something if it's required.

I use Adobe Lightroom for my post-production work, to import the images and to undertake sorting. One key for me is that I have a strong memory of the day's best images, fresh in my mind, so I can rate these images using this starting point. Sometimes it's not until you look at the results on large screen

that you'll see a photo's true impact. I start with a 'one star' rating, which in my system means that I think they're great images, but they are not yet processed. I move through the images and rate them as I go. Later, I will process the image and once it's finished, I will give it a rating out of five stars. This tells me it's ready to send to an editor, add in a book, or use in some other option. Lots of variations to marking images are available in different programs. Use the one that suits you best, but my big tip here is 'KIS', or 'Keep It Simple'. Who wants to be working on a laptop for hours in the field when you could be shooting, or simply enjoying a stunning location (another important element of exploration which can sometimes be overlooked)?

02 Redefine your best

At the end of an adventure, especially if I'm sitting in an airport, I'll go through my images for a second time. I work on the basis that I'm looking at them with fresh eyes, because I've had a break from my initial sorting. I confirm my best work, but I will go through this time looking specifically for images which might have another use. Images which will work in black and white don't always show themselves straight away. What you think is a 'hero' image might not interest a magazine editor. What you think will work well in a photo



I shot this image while on tour in the Canadian Rockies in 2007. The year is not so important to me. Finding it fast is! Canon EOS 5D, 17-40mm lens @ 17mm, 41s @ f/16, ISO 100, tripod. Vibrance, contrast, shadows, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.



competition, might not. The photographers who are best at selecting their 'hero' images will often understand the needs of a target use. This can require the selection of an image (or images) they might not always personally select. You might also consider creating a 'Collection' in Lightroom, targeting specific topics like landscapes, people, birds or for a special project like a book. I don't do this, but some of my customers love to use this system to find their own 'hero' images.

03 Software solutions

Photographers need to be organised and disciplined, especially in today's digital era. For example, if you don't understand a good base software program to help you sort out and edit your images, and you don't keep your images in a logical order, if you don't archive (and back up) your digital files, then any of these points can negatively impact on your craft.

You don't want to be 'a clone' and some of us will perform our best creative work in a more organic way. But try to balance being pedantic with being creative. Staying on top of your catalogue and understanding the basics of your key programs is an important skill in the digital world and it will have a long-term benefit in your quest to refine your best images.

04 Find your direction

Understanding the direction in which you wish to take your photography is vital. I consider this a key starting point whether you're shooting or putting together a portfolio. It doesn't matter whether you're a novice or a seasoned shooter, having a direction will not only guide what and how you shoot, but how you present your work.

You might have great images, but without a clear aim or theme it can be a battle to reach your creative goals. Your ambition

HOW TO Pick Your Best Images

LEFT

Finding rare animals easily in your filing system can be important when you're organising special projects. These Siberian Tigers are images I might not ever get to shoot again. Canon 5D Mk III, 50-500mm lens @ 244mm, 1/1500s @ f/5.6, ISO 400, hand held. Vibrance, contrast, shadows, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.

BELOW

Working dogs are a key to a farmer's success all over the world. This image was shot in Patagonia, using a super wide-angle lens, up close. Nikon D3X, 14-24mm lens @ 14mm, 1/750s @ f/5.6, ISO 400, EV +1, hand held. B&W conversion, contrast, blacks, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.



could be anything from simply taking images for your own satisfaction, to sharing them with the world. Before you begin a project, think carefully about what you're doing, what you're trying to achieve and the story you want to tell.

05 Take on a project

On a similar tack, whether you're shooting at home or travelling the world set projects and goals for yourself. For a beginner photographer your goal might be as simple as making a series of portraits with the eyes in focus and the background blurred by a restricted depth of field. For a more advanced photographer you might set yourself the goal of photographing a particular bird species in your area with the aim of creating a custom photo book. Thinking about how the images will be used later on can be a great way to get you thinking creatively as you have to approach the same subject from a range of





ABOVE

Visiting the Himba people offers great 'cultural' shoots. They increase your 'hero' image rate just through their unique attributes. Sony A900, 70-400mm lens @ 300mm, 1/200s @ f/5.6, ISO 100, hand held. Vibrance, contrast, shadows, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.

Top tips for shooting 'hero' images

1. Isolate your subject, either by using limited depth of field or by positioning the subject. This approach draws the viewer straight to the subject and limits distractions.
2. A balanced look between strictly correct technical elements and a creative feel is vital to the final result. You can be as technical as you like, but in my view the best images come from a balanced look.
3. Give yourself space for the subject within the frame. Especially with cameras which can shoot huge files, you can always crop to suit your creative thinking.
4. Visualisation of the end result is vital. This includes visualisation pre-shooting, while shooting, and in post production. Not only do you need to take the shoot itself into consideration, you also need to think about how you'll process the image. Photography is not just about pressing the shutter button!

different perspectives. Rather than just taking photographs for the fun of it set yourself a project – with a deadline – and finish it. No matter how experienced you are, I guarantee you will learn new things with each new challenge.

06 Workflow and backup

I transfer the images from my laptop and archive them to my Drobo 15TB data storage system, which is linked to my desktop system. This is very important! You should have at least two copies of your images – always! Drives and storage devices can crash, with terrible consequences if you don't have a copy. This is even more important for your 'hero' shots. When you're in a less exciting or distracting location, you should be able to go through all your images and enjoy them again. This is a handy time for sorting those last few images to add to your 'hero' list. I shoot in RAW and I convert my images to DNG (Digital Negative files) as they import. This keeps any processing, or image rating information with the photo and it's simple.

Some of you might be thinking that I do a lot of sorting of my images. Nothing could be further from the truth! I spend as little time as possible with each step. Likewise, I spend as little time as possible with image processing. As a general rule (and obviously subject to the rare times when complex creative Photoshop is required) I spend less than a minute on most of my images in post-production processing. So, from 3,000 images from a two-week tour I might end up with around 300 'hero' images, rated as five-star book quality. I don't process every image.

07 Make a book

The arrival of affordable limited-run photo book printing has been a boon for amateur and professional photographers alike. There are a number of options available and it's possible to produce a glossy coffee-table book showcasing your own images in just a few days.

This is where your skill at sorting your images and working out which images work well together comes to the fore. Think about visual style and the story that your pictures tell. Experiment with different layouts and keep asking yourself, does this image advance the story I am telling or detract from it. Sometimes you might find a great image actually takes away from what you are trying to achieve. It might jar with the visual style of the other images, or act as a distraction from the message you are trying to convey. Sometimes you need to be ruthless – if it's not helping, get rid of it.

Practically, you'll find it helps if your photo library is well organised. When I put together a book of a recent photo tour, I go to the folder in Lightroom and sort the images so only those images with five-star ratings are shown. As long as you rate your images as you go, this step can be a big time saver.

08 Share your amazingness!

On most of my travels, by the time I start organising photo books I have uploaded my images to Facebook and Instagram during the trip. Most of these would be straight 'fun' travel pics, with what I reckon is the odd 'cool' shot. Once I get home I will start to upload some of the more creative images.

I also love audio-visually. Since 1982 I have set a selection of 'hero' images to music. It's a fantastic way to show friends and family what's happened, and for me, it opens up business



opportunities. Your phone is another top tool for showing images. I have 'hero' images on my phone and I can easily show anyone who's interested in a cross-section of my work.

09 Set a 'hero' folder

For me, a 'hero' folder is very important. At all times I have my 'hero' images with me as processed RAW files. I have the same folder on my laptop in the field and on my desktop in the office. Many times each year, when I'm on tour and writing articles for AP I can go straight to my 'hero' folder and access images to suit a given theme.

10 The next step

If you've followed this advice on organising your files, you should now have your best images separated into a hero folder. Now it's time to share your images with the world. Here's a couple of ideas for you. Contact a magazine (you can get the editor of this mag at editor@australianphotography.com) or your local newspaper with a story submission. Enter a portfolio competition like AP's 2015 Photographer of the Year (www.australianphotography.com). Or, if that all sounds too hard, try putting together your own photo book? I love the fact that anyone, of any experience level, can so easily share their work in print. 🌟



ABOVE

A special moment as new-born pup bonds with mum on the Galapagos Islands in 2005. Canon EOS 5D, 100-400mm lens @ 150mm, 1/350s @ f/5.6, ISO 200, hand held. Vibrance, contrast, shadows, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.

TOP

Sapphire hunters working hard in Madagascar. For me, black and white offered far more drama to this image. Canon 5D, 24-105mm lens @ 24mm, 1/1500s @ f/8, ISO 200, hand held. B&W conversion, contrast, blacks, sharpened. Adjusted in Adobe Lightroom 5.

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- Zenfolio Premium 2-year Business Account valued at \$480
- WD package valued at \$895
- 6 x \$100 voucher from Camera House

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Upload a portfolio of six images, addressing one of the categories (Landscape, Portrait, Nature or Black & White) @ www.australianphotography.com 

- You may enter more than one category (however, the same photo may not be used in multiple categories, for example Landscape and Black and White).
- Entries close: 5pm, 6 November, 2015.
- You may enter each category as many times as you like.
- Entry fee: Adult, \$20 per portfolio of six images. Junior, \$10 per portfolio of six images

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Life on the street

Shooting life on the street is easier than you probably think. Pro shooter Drew Hopper outlines the techniques that work best for him.



The daily commute in Vietnam. I liked the tones and textures in the wall, so I waited about an hour for my subjects to come into frame. Canon 5D Mk II, 24-70mm @ 42mm, 1/640s @ f/4.5, ISO 250. Curves, contrast, colour balance and sharpening in Photoshop CS5.



Street photography is about documenting everyday life and society on the streets. There are opportunities for street photography everywhere, and you don't necessarily need to travel to capture great images. It's a genre often done candidly, without permission, and without your subject's knowledge. However, taking 'street' images doesn't rule out creating staged pictures, or asking for portraits. You might spot an interesting character who catches your eye; there's no law saying you can't wander up to strangers and ask for permission to take their picture! This is a great way to get a more intimate portrait of someone in his or her environment. The most important thing with street photography is to have fun and enjoy getting out with your camera. Remember, your goal is to capture emotion, humanity, and something of a person's character. It takes time to get these shots, but with some practice and patience it can be really rewarding. Here are some tips about the genre which I've picked up from my own experience.

01 The best lens

Deciding what lens to use is one of the most important factors in creating interesting street photography. You may be tempted to use a telephoto lens, but that's more than likely to result in more harm than good. While it can be an effective option in some circumstances, usually you don't want to be that 'creepy person' standing across the road aiming a giant lens at strangers! If you want to look inconspicuous generally you're going to have to get up close and amongst the action. Use a wide-angle lens and get lost in a busy crowd. Most street photographers use a focal length between 35 and 50mm, though sometimes they'll go wider if they're trying to fit more in the frame. By using a prime lens you know exactly where to be so you can focus on composing and not worry about what focal length you'll need to use. Often street shooters will use compact cameras in preference to SLRs because they are more discrete.



LEFT

A couple sits by the river taking in the cityscape from Captain Burke Park, under the Story Bridge at Kangaroo Point. I liked the atmosphere created by the street light and the lights reflecting on the water. Canon 5D Mk II, 17-40mm @ 20mm, 3s @ f/14, ISO 3200, tripod. Converted to monochrome, contrast, noise reduction and sharpening in Photoshop CS5.

BELOW

Rays of natural light hit the street as a woman carries her produce to market in Hanoi, Vietnam. I waited for my subject to walk into frame to be highlighted by the beam. Canon 5D Mk II, 70-200mm @ 200mm, 1/2500s @ f/2.8, ISO 400, handheld. Curves, levels, contrast and sharpening in Photoshop CS5.



02 The best settings

I find the quickest and easiest way to set up my camera for street photography is to switch the camera to AV (aperture-priority mode) and select the f-stop (aperture) and ISO manually. The camera will then decide for itself what the shutter speed (exposure) should be set to. On a bright sunny day, a good place to start is around f/16 with an ISO between 200 and 400. If your camera shows you a shutter speed higher than 1/200s you're ready to roll. Take note of the shutter speed your camera is reading and make adjustments to aperture and ISO accordingly. If your camera is giving you a shutter speed that is below 1/80s chances are it's going to blur your photos (though this can be a good effect in the right situations). If you need to overcome this for the type of image you want, simply increase your ISO and/or open up your aperture (set a smaller number like f/4). If you're new to photography you can always set the camera to P mode (program or auto) and let the camera figure out the settings.

You can still adjust the EV (Exposure Value) if you want to either over- or underexpose your shot. This is useful if you're shooting 'run and gun' (in a hurry, with no time to think), but you'll have little control over what the camera is doing, so this isn't always the best option. Program mode does a pretty decent job, but I wouldn't rely on it in low light where there's a high possibility your shutter speed will be too slow to freeze any action.

03 Use your feet

By using a wide-angle lens you'll be able to get nice and close to your subjects. The advantage of this is the wide angle will give the viewer a sense of being 'right there' in the moment. You'll also blend in with the crowd as part of the environment, rather than standing across the street looking with a telephoto lens. A lot of successful street photos were taken within a couple of metres of the action – sometimes only centimetres away. Taking a walk through a busy street, market or park can result in some



rewarding pictures when you put yourself in the moment. If your images aren't working out the way you visualised them, you're probably not close enough. Activate the shoe-leather zoom (get closer) and your images will almost certainly benefit!

04 Be prepared

Street photography is spontaneous – it waits for no-one. It's a discipline you have to force upon yourself. Your camera is an extension of you; it's your gateway to sharing your vision with the world and you don't want to miss an amazing photo opp because you don't have your camera with you.

If you're serious about street photography you'll have your camera within reach whenever a key moment presents itself. The 'decisive moment,' as it was named by legendary French street photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, requires anticipation and split-second timing. You'll rarely get a second chance, so you have to be prepared. Having your camera at hand at all times means you'll be able to make the most of those decisive moments.

05 Be brave!

Some people struggle with the idea of street photography. It can be like a voice in your head, telling you that your idea won't work. A common fear is that subjects will respond angrily if you take their picture, threaten you with physical violence, or call the police! It's possible to overcome these fears by practicing and getting out more with your camera. Here are some things I've tried in an effort to overcome or at least push those fears to the back of my mind.

Try different techniques while you're out and about. Find an interesting spot to sit with your camera at the ready. I spend a lot of time at cafes and restaurants when I travel, and I always have my camera handy. By observing street life from a comfortable setting you'll feel at ease and be able to wait for pictures to come to you. You're less likely to be noticed sitting outside a café than standing in the middle of the street. I also find it useful to listen to music, which can be both a distraction and an inspiration. Most of all I find that it helps me relax and feeds my creativity. It might not sound logical,



but it works wonders, and if it means you're comfortable in your surrounds then it's worth a shot.

Please note, I don't suggest you listen to music at night, in unfamiliar locations, or anywhere you feel unsafe! You should always be aware of your surroundings.

06 Shoot from the hip

As a general rule in street photography, if you can get the shot with the camera to your eye, you'll get a better image. However, there are times when it's not possible to raise the camera to your eye, so shooting from the hip is a useful method of capturing a decisive moment.

When I first started shooting on the street I found it difficult to hold the camera to my eye and point it at strangers, so I started holding the camera by my hip to capture more candid pictures. At first I wasn't successful, but once I started to get a feel for my camera and the best focal length I was able to capture some great candid moments. This approach is even easier if you have a tilting LCD or viewfinder.

ABOVE

A street vendor wearing a conical hat in Hanoi, Vietnam. I like the different textures in this scene. The shadows and contrast of colour add dimension to the image. Canon 5D Mk II, 70-200mm @ 200mm, 1/2500 @ f/2.8, ISO 400, handheld. Curves, contrast, saturation, clarity and sharpening in Photoshop CS5.




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07 Light the night

Night photography on the street offers some great opportunities for unique images. It's not as easy as shooting during the day; you'll need to be mindful of using slow shutter speeds and you'll have to understand how to avoid blur (if that's what you want to achieve). High ISOs and wide apertures can compensate for very low light. You could also take a tripod with you if you plan to make long exposures, but sometimes that's just another thing to carry! By using a fast aperture lens (f/2.8 or faster) you'll be able to shoot low-light scenes and still freeze the action. When you're shooting at night try to find interesting lines, shadows and compositions to give your image a bold visual impact. Silhouetted subjects are also interesting and can create nice compositions with the shadow filling the foreground.

08 Good ideas

Powerful ideas and emotions can be portrayed through the simplest of compositions. Most people wrongly associate street photography with people or portraits on the street. You don't always need people in the frame, or to capture interesting juxtapositions, or fit as many different

people or objects into the frame as possible. It might be difficult in busy places, but take a walk down a quiet alleyway or side street and search for different subjects. You'll find there are opportunities for all kinds of images, with or without people. While I was in Vietnam I spent time wandering the streets photographing bicycles, which I have turned into a small series titled "Transportation", and it's been quite popular amongst the photo community. This wasn't my intention, but by doing something different I was able to stand out in the photography scene.

09 Quality isn't everything

Some photographers might disagree with me on this point, but from my experience shooting on the street I haven't been concerned with image quality as much as I am when I'm shooting landscapes or commercial images. You should strive for high image quality where possible, but arguably with street photography it's not as important. Composition, light, drama and the story you're trying to tell are more important than image quality. If your images capture those four elements, then you're on the right path to becoming a better street shooter. Sharpness, low noise and immaculate image quality are worthless if you have

a poor composition, bad light or your picture does not tell a story. Remember, focus on what's important because that's essentially what makes a great street image.

10 Have fun!

Like all genres of photography it's important to enjoy what you do and do what you enjoy. If shooting on the street doesn't sound like your kind of thing, chances are you'll probably be making ordinary images. Creativity flows from where the passion lives, so do what makes you happy, not what other people expect to see from you. I love shooting the street because it gets me out and about, meeting interesting people and seeing everyday life from a fresh perspective. That's what inspires me to do what I do, and that flows into my creative output.

11 Just do it!

Street photography is a discipline you force upon yourself and you do it for the little joys you derive from it. I'd argue this style of picture taking is really the most challenging genre in our craft. It requires practice, and the more you get out there, the more your photographic 'eye' will develop and your confidence will grow. The basic approach to this style of image-making is much simpler than some other genres. In this field I believe manipulation should be kept to the minimum, with hardly any post-processing. The only post production I tend to do with my street photography is through my camera viewfinder when I compose my shot. Perception and intuition are really the most important factors in making more creative 'street' images. Perception requires a great eye for detail and a high attention level. Intuition, on the other hand, is immediate and isn't duty bound to any attentive thinking. When you're in the right groove, these two factors can combine to create Cartier-Bresson's famous 'decisive moment'. It's an amazing process and it can take your images to the next level. I believe the best street photos come from powerful ideas and emotions captured in a simple way. Street photography comes down to perception, and forcing yourself out and about with your camera in search of the decisive moments which will inevitably unfold in front of you. But street photos aren't ultimately made in the mind, they're made in streets – so go out, take photos, and love it! 📷



ABOVE

Businessmen wait for their ride home in Sydney CBD. I wanted to capture a sense of motion so setting the camera on a tripod I was able to blur passing traffic. Canon 5D Mk II, Canon 17-40mm @ 39mm, 0.5s @ f/4.5, ISO 400, tripod. Curves, contrast, saturation and sharpness in Photoshop CS5.

OPPOSITE

Bustling market in Hoi An, Vietnam, in the afternoon golden hour. Working in the afternoon light made for an atmospheric image full of life. My favourite time to be shooting. Canon 5D Mk II, 35mm @ f/4.5, 1/1600s, ISO 250, handheld. Curves, contrast, colour balance and sharpening in Photoshop CS5.



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Mix it up!



Modern retouching workflows often require you to switch between several programs to make the most of different editing features. In this tutorial, [Mark Galer](#) shows you how to switch between Lightroom and Photoshop in order to take control of colour and tone. Download the start image and follow the steps.



SOFTWARE
Lightroom 5
and Adobe
Photoshop CC

RATING
Advanced

The start image for this project was shot late one afternoon at Princes Pier in Port Melbourne with a Sony A6000 and an off-camera flash fired through a white umbrella. The image was underexposed by 1.3 stops, but the final image has failed to capture the ideal tonal balance between the model and the background. That's okay because the tonal information in the Raw file sits comfortably between the goal posts of absolute black and white, so there's plenty of room to redistribute the highlight and shadow information in Lightroom before we move the file into Photoshop CC to complete the retouching and grading process. Turn the page to get started. 📄

Note: This workflow requires you use the same version of Camera Raw in Photoshop CC and Lightroom 5. Unfortunately, because we've used Radial Filters in Lightroom, and Camera Raw as a Smart Filter in Photoshop CC, you can't complete this tutorial using Photoshop CS6 and Lightroom 4.





HOW TO Lightroom and Photoshop Retouching Workflows



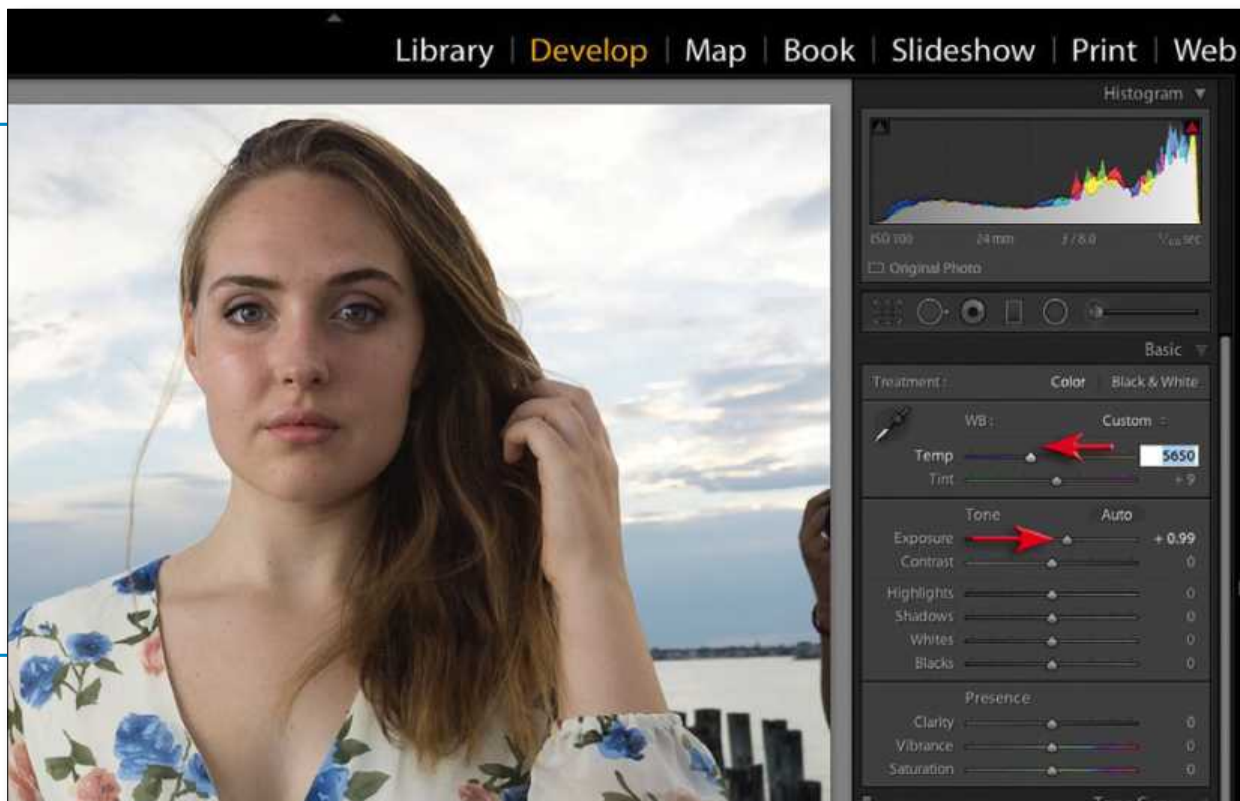
01 DOWNLOAD START IMAGE

Before we get started, download the free project image from www.australianphotography.com (From the home page, go to the 'how to' menu, then select 'tutorial images'.) Take note of where the image is saved on your desktop. In Lightroom, make sure you're in the *Library* module and, in the main menu, choose *File > Import Photos and Video...* Find the image you downloaded, make sure the box next to the image is ticked and choose *Import*.

02

DEVELOP

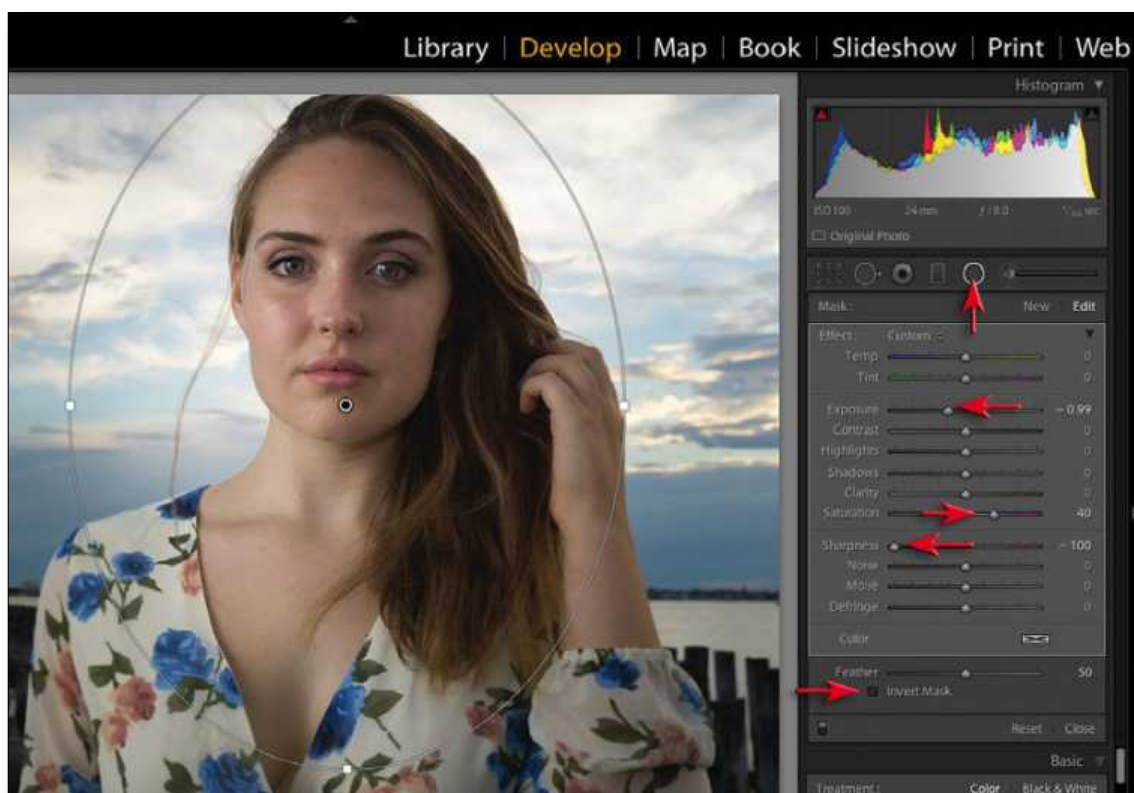
Click the *Develop* tab or press *D* on your keyboard to enter Lightroom's editing module. As Lightroom is a 'non-linear' editing program it doesn't really matter where you start. I usually start with what annoys me the most and finish with what annoys me the least. First, reduce the *Temp* slider to 5650°K. Now, move the *Exposure* up to a setting closer to +1.



03

CROP

Click the *Crop Overlay* icon (it's just below the histogram) and click and drag just outside any the corner handles to rotate the image so the horizon is level. Press the *Enter/Return* key on your keyboard to apply the crop.



04

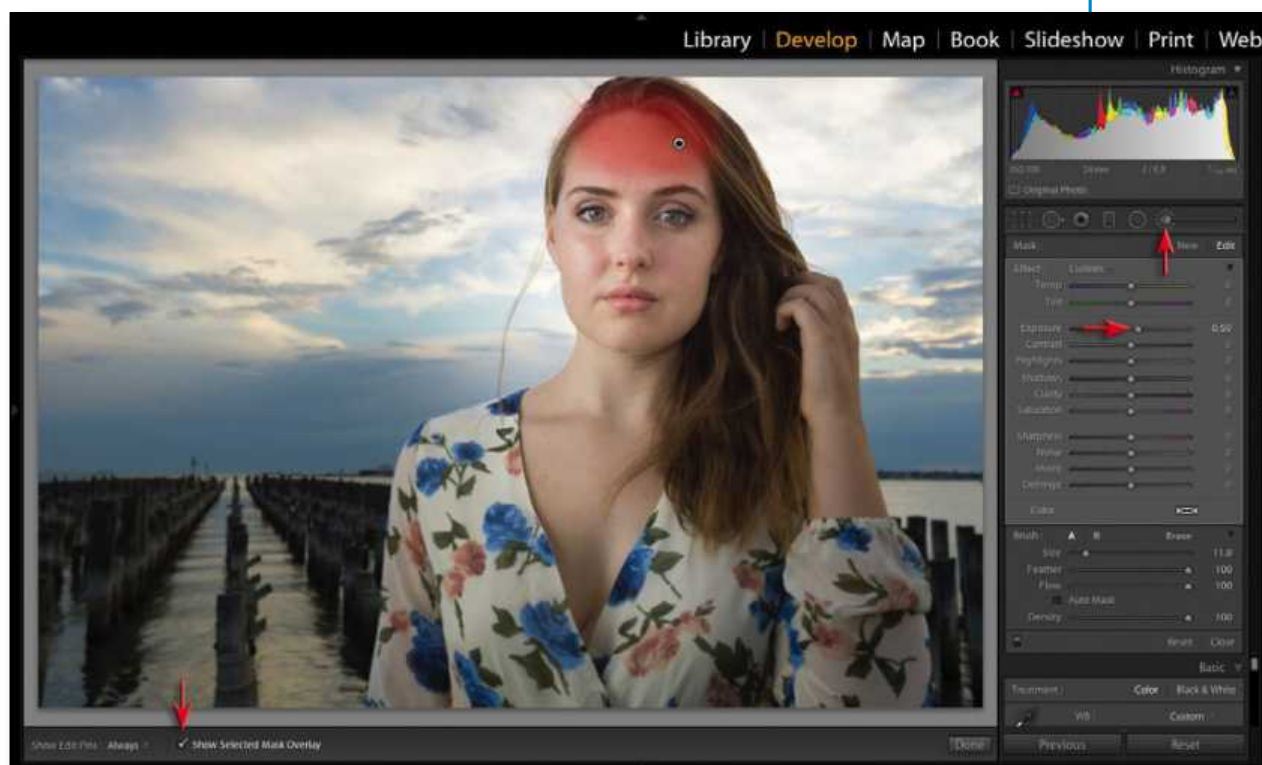
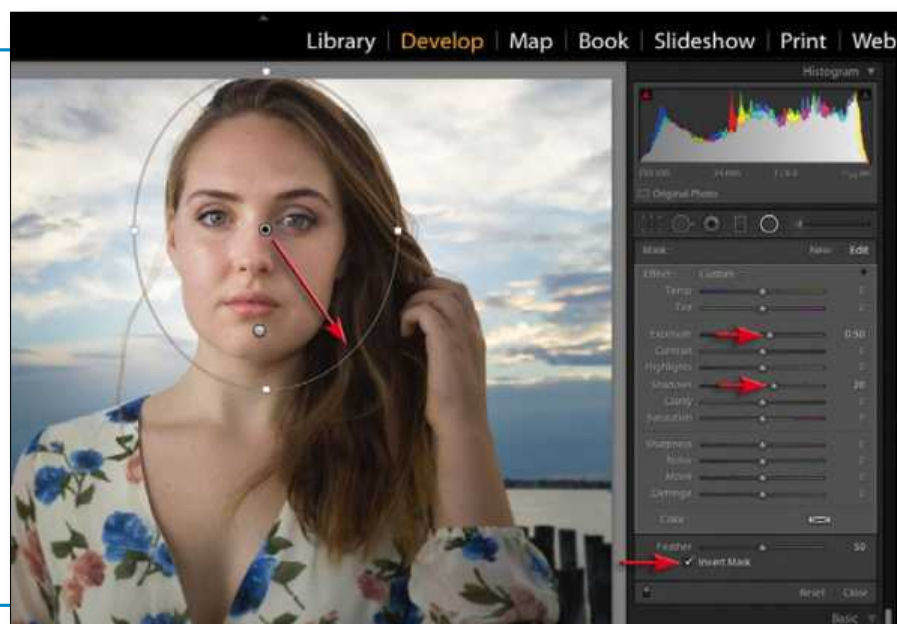
FIRST RADIAL FILTER

The next step is to even up the lighting of the model and the background. Click the *Radial Filter* icon (below the histogram) then double-click the word *Effect* to zero the sliders. Reduce the *Exposure* slider to -1EV, raise the *Saturation* slider to +40 and lower the *Sharpness* slider to -100. Make sure the box *Invert Mask* is not ticked. Now click and drag a *Radial Filter* from the model's chin down towards her elbow. You can see the background now looks more dramatic and is not as sharp as it was before.

05

SECOND RADIAL FILTER

Click the word *New* to generate a new *Radial Filter* and double-click *Effect* to reset the sliders. Change the *Exposure* to +0.5 and the *Shadows* to +20. This time, check *Invert Mask* to ensure the effect is applied inside the ellipse. Click and drag the second *Radial Filter* from the bridge of the model's nose down and out, so the ellipse covers her head. You'll notice that the top of her forehead is still a little dark – don't worry, we'll fix it in the next step.



06

ADJUSTMENT BRUSH

Select the *Adjustment Brush* icon below the histogram. Move the *Exposure* slider to +0.5 and make sure the *Feather*, *Flow* and *Density* sliders are set to 100. Paint over the top of the model's forehead. The transition should be nice and gradual with the *Feather* set to 100. If you want to see the mask area, tick the box *Show Selected Mask Overlay* (it's below the main image window). If you want to erase anything you've just done, hold down the *Alt/Option* and paint over the area. Alternatively, if you reduce the *Density* slider to +50 and paint over the mask it will soften the effect of the adjustment.

HOW TO Lightroom and Photoshop Retouching Workflows

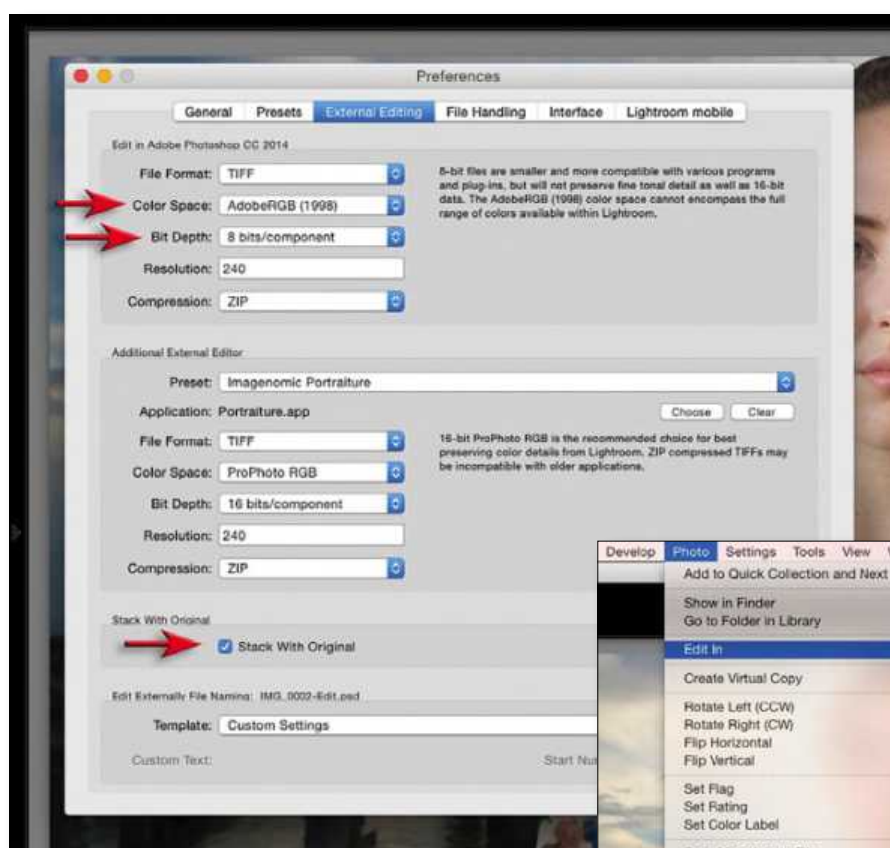
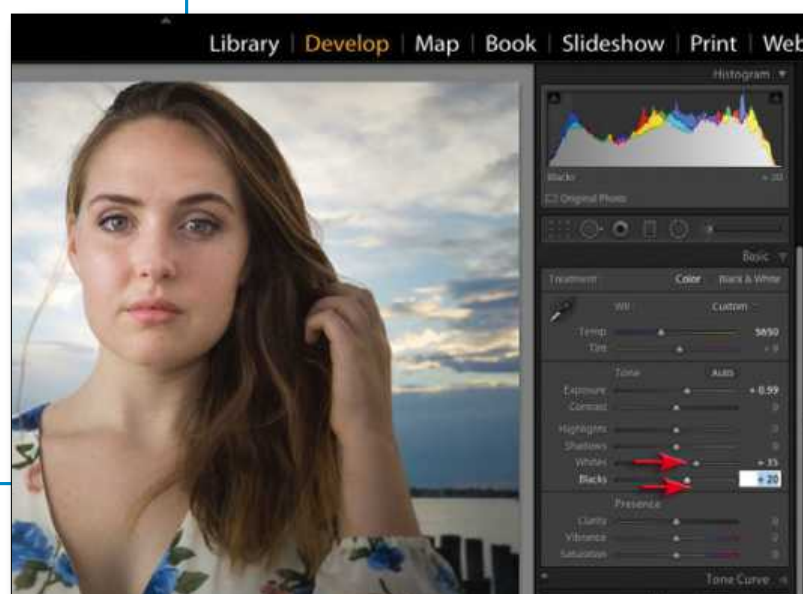


07 VIGNETTE

We can keep viewers' eyes locked on the centre of the image by darkening the edges of the image slightly. Scroll down to the *Effects* panel and choose *Color Priority* in the drop-down menu. Now, reduce the *Amount* to -25. Note: The *Color Priority* slider is less likely to clip shadow tones in the corners of the image compared to the *Highlight Priority* style.

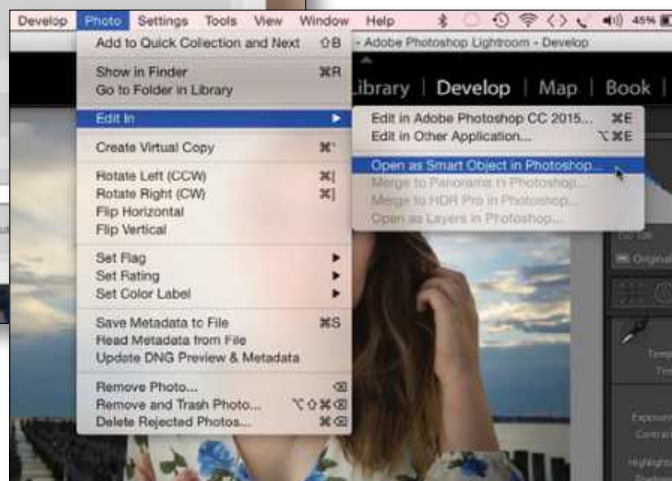
08 SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

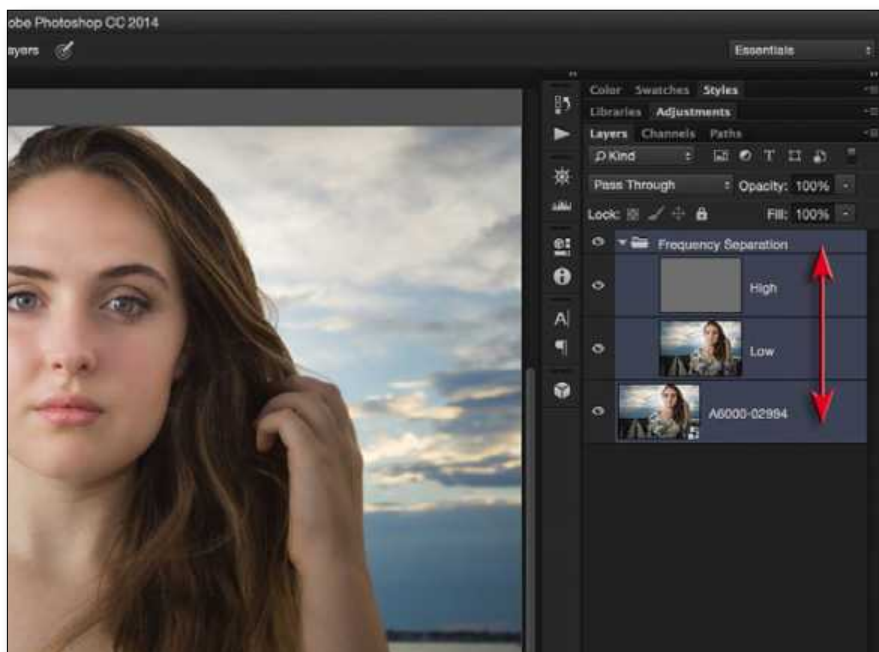
Before we take the image into Photoshop, let's check the *Whites* and *Blacks* on the histogram. First, click the two clipping warning triangles above the histogram – with these selected, you will be able to see if you are losing detail in the highlights or shadows. Raise the *Whites* slider to +35 and the *Blacks* slider to +20.



09 OPEN IN PHOTOSHOP CC

For the next stage of the editing process we need to take the image into Photoshop CC. Before we do, in the main menu, go to *Lightroom > Preferences* and choose the *External Editing* tab. Because Lightroom has done most of the heavy lifting in the tonal adjustments department, it's overkill to export the file in 16-bit format and with the oversized ProPhoto colour space. Chose *TIFF*, *Adobe RGB (1998)* and *8 bits/component* and tick the *Stack with Original* option to catalog the file with the original Raw file. Close the *Preferences* window and in the main menu go to *Photo > Edit in... > Open as Smart Object in Photoshop*. (The *Smart Object* option allows us to keep our editing options open in Photoshop CC as we will be able to return to the file's raw adjustments at any time.)





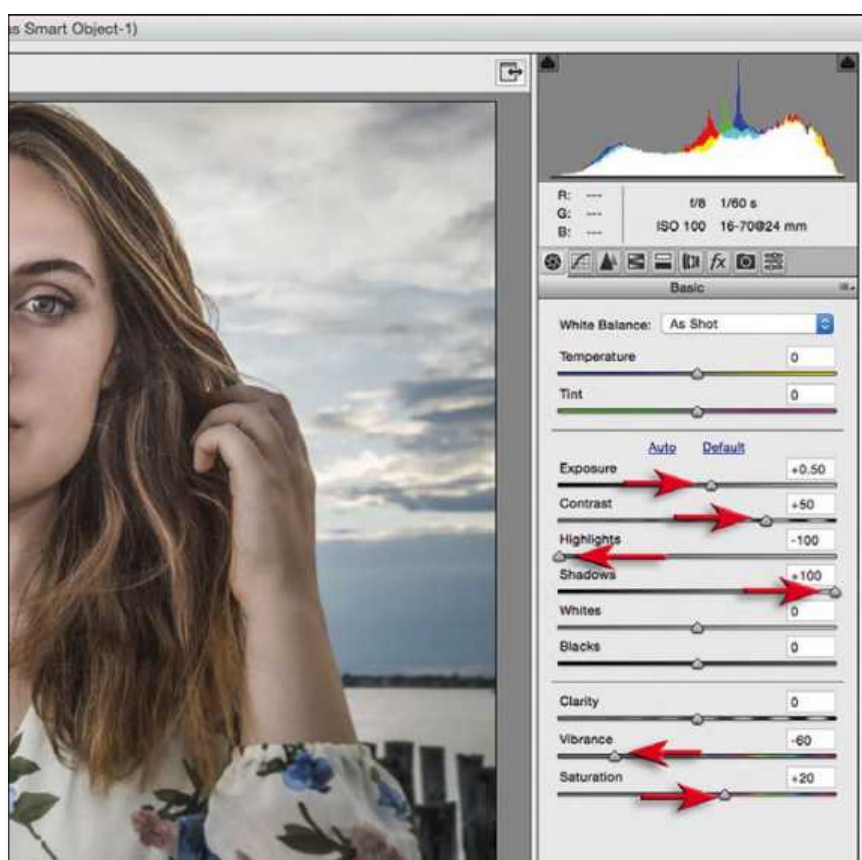
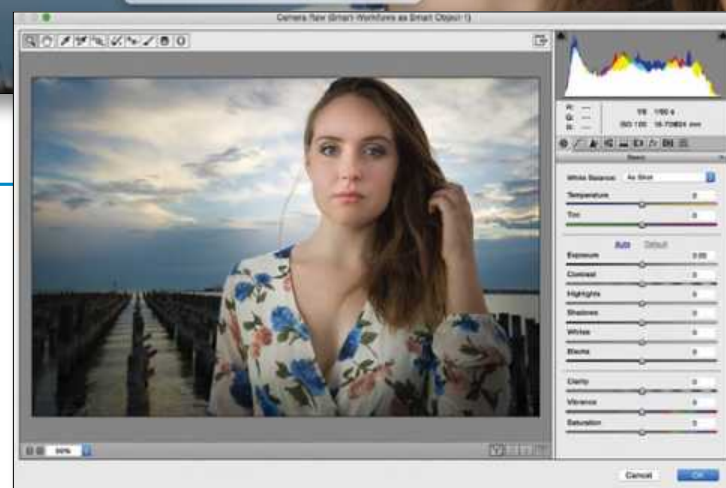
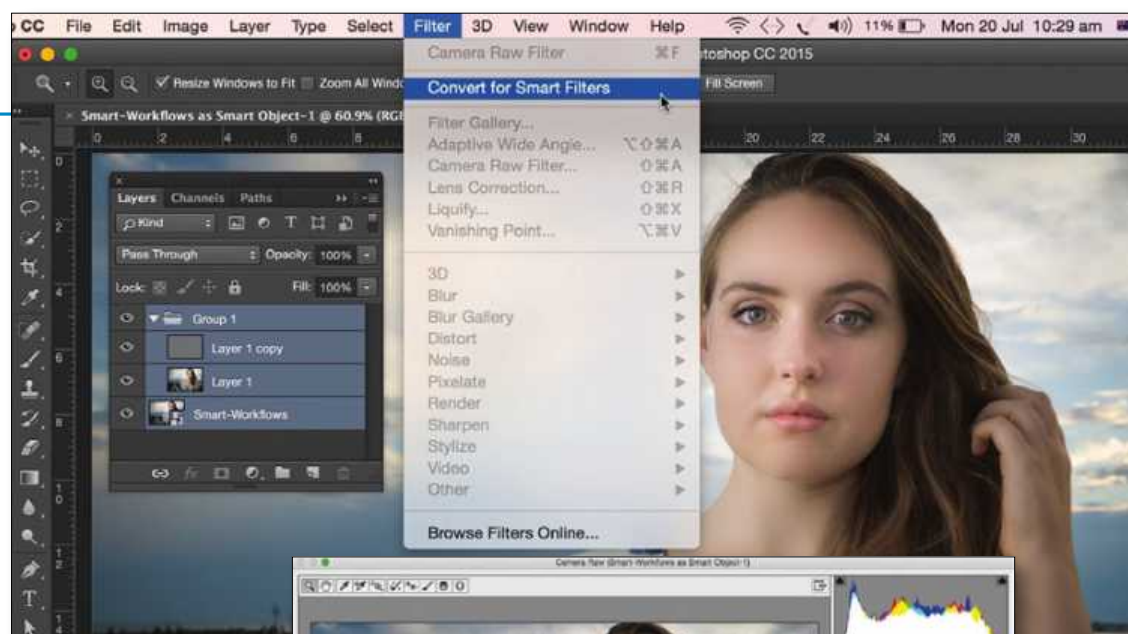
10 SMOOTH SKIN

At this point I've used a technique called 'Frequency Separation' to smooth the model's skin. It's a great technique but it's a subject worthy of a tutorial in its own right so I'll leave it for another issue to cover in detail. In the meantime, if you do want to have a go at it, there's a good explanation on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ldhG9fmgC7o>. Otherwise, skip to the next step without worrying about retouching the model's skin.

11 CAMERA RAW FILTER

If you have completed the Frequency Separation process from step 10, select all the layers in the stack (shift click to select multiple layers) and in the main menu go to **Filter > Convert for Smart Filters**. Now choose **Filter > Camera Raw Filter**. If you didn't do step 10 and you just have the one layer in the Layers panel, just select **Filter > Camera Raw Filter**.

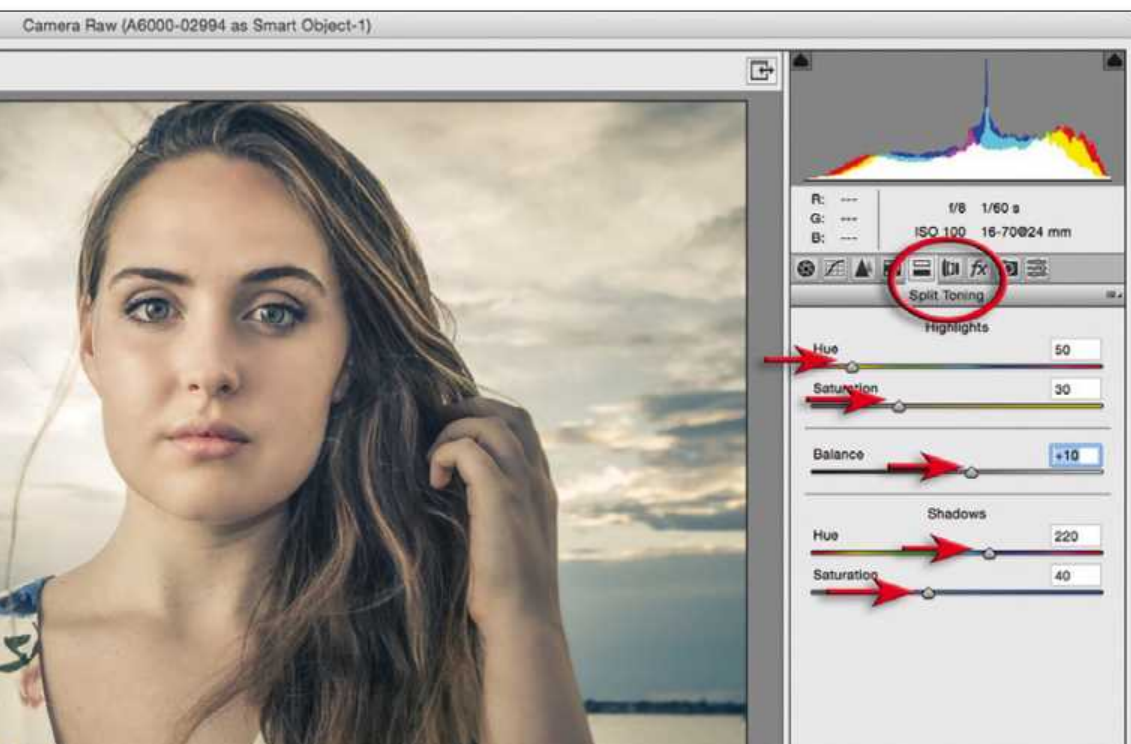
The advantage of using the Adobe Camera Raw filter as opposed to double-clicking the *Smart Object* to open the Raw file, is that all the settings are zeroed.



12 COLOUR AND TONE

Rather than optimising the tonal and colour values of the image I'm more interested in creating a stylised, illustrative version of the image. In the *Basic* panel dragging the *Highlights* slider all the way to the left and the *Shadows* slider all the way to the right. Now, up the *Contrast* to +50 and the *Exposure* to +0.50. Reduce the colour palette by dragging the *Vibrance* slider to -60 and the *Saturation* slider to +20. This has created a rather distinctive colour and tone. We can take it a step further using the *Split Toning* panel.

HOW TO Lightroom and Photoshop Retouching Workflows



13

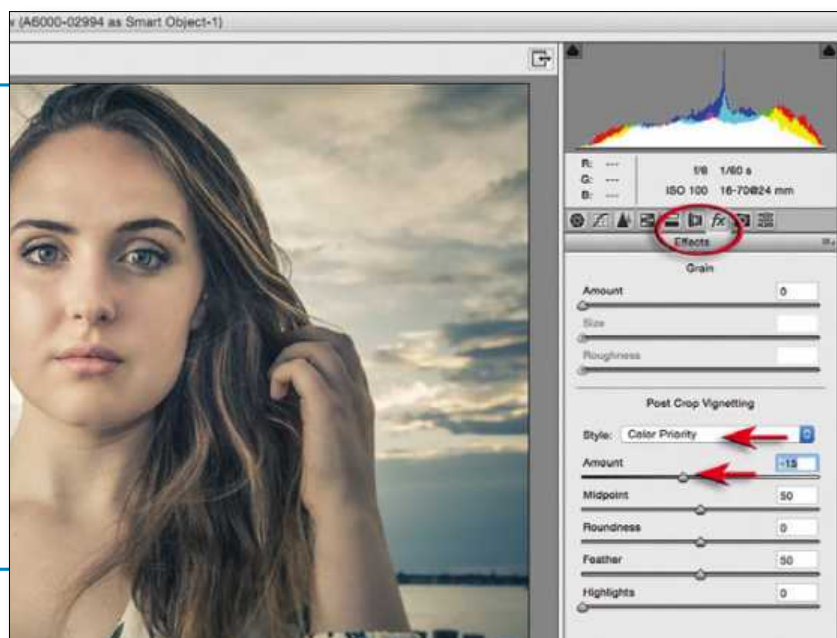
SPLIT TONING

Click the *Split Toning* icon (below the histogram) to bring up the *Split Toning* panel. Change the *Highlights* to a hue of 50° with a *Saturation* of +30 and the *Shadows* to a hue of 220° with a *Saturation* of +40. Move the *Balance* slider to +10 to move the emphasis towards the warmer colours.

14

VIGNETTE

Click the *Effects* icon (below the histogram) to bring up the *Effects* panel. Under the *Post Crop Vignetting* header choose an *Amount* of -15 and select *Color Priority*. This step will render the peripheral parts of the image darker so they will take on more of the *Teale* colouring.



15

WHITES AND BLACKS

Let's go back to the *Basic* panel and check the *Whites* and *Blacks*. The point of this step is to make sure the aggressive toning adjustments we've made have not caused too many problems. You can extend the tonal range of this image slightly by lowering the *Blacks* slider to -20. Click the *OK* button to apply the changes and return to Photoshop





16

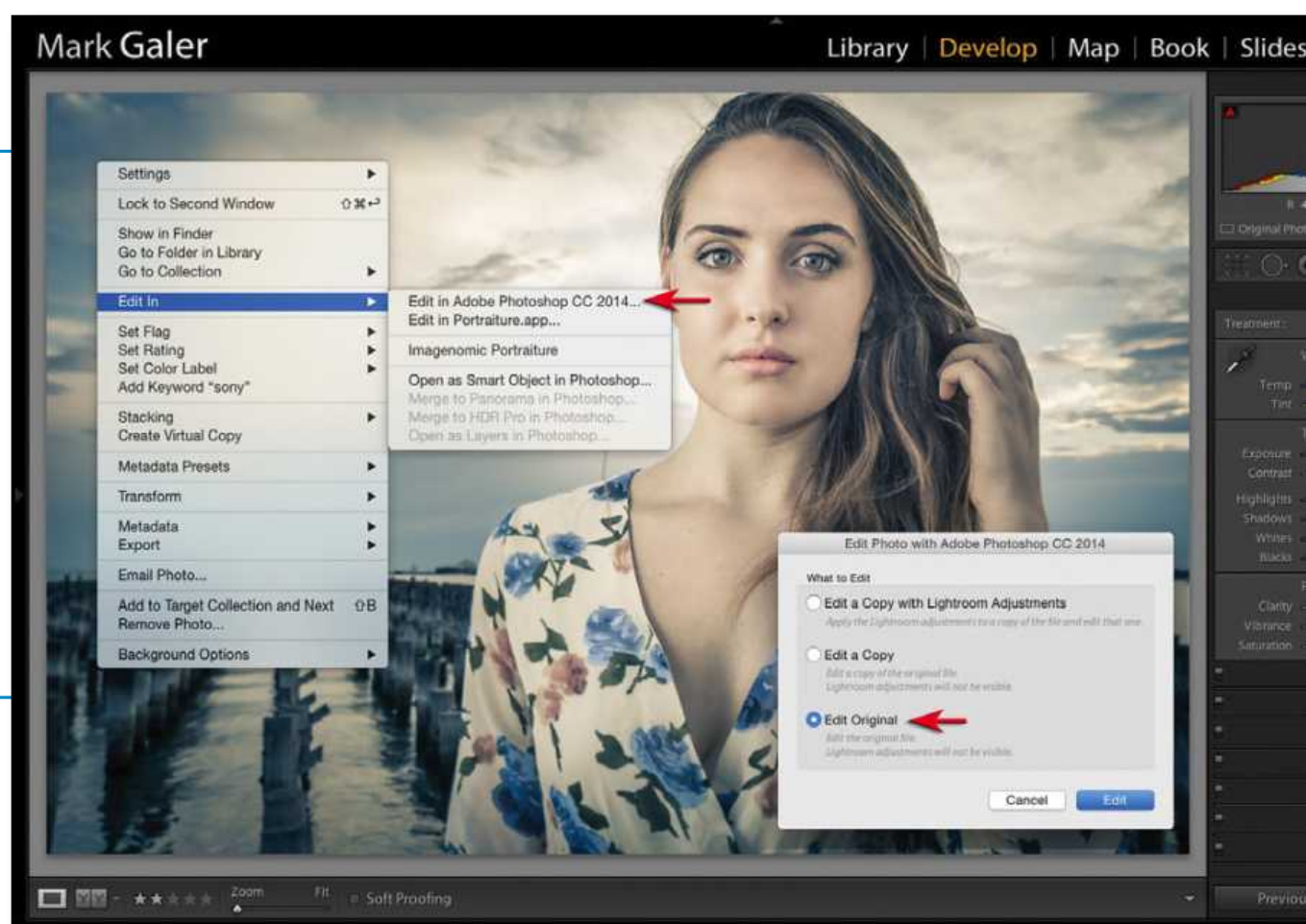
SAVE AND CLOSE

To return the processed file to Lightroom go to *File > Save* in the main menu and close the file. By default, the location for saving the file is the folder where the original Raw file is located. Lightroom monitors this folder (as we asked Lightroom to open one of its catalogued files) and will automatically import and stack this file with the original (as per our *Preference* setting in step 09).

17

BACK TO PHOTOSHOP CC

If you are in Lightroom and you want to reopen this file in Photoshop CC (with access to the *Smart Filters* and embedded Raw file), you need to select the *Edit in Photoshop* option (*Ctrl-E* Windows, *Command-E* Mac) then choose *Edit Original* from the *Edit Photo* dialog box. Any changes made to this file will be updated in Lightroom as soon as you save and return.

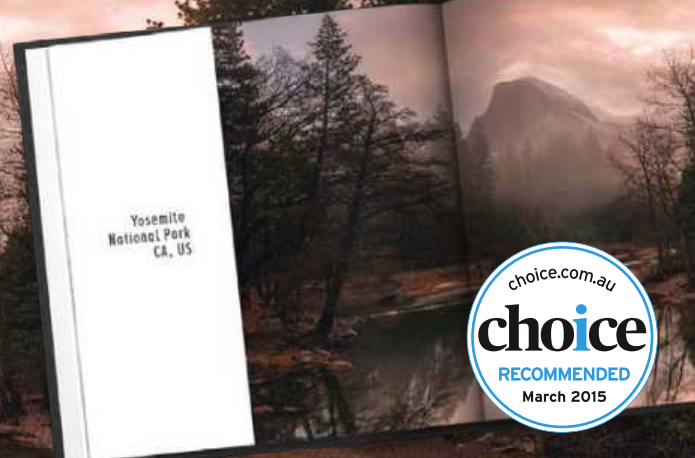


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Let the show begin

Shooting stage performances requires planning, skill and instinctive timing. Rob Ditessa talked to three experts who share their best tips and tricks for capturing dynamic and memorable images.

“I always try to capture the vibe of the show so when a fan or someone else looks at the photographs they can feel like they were at the show. In the end, I’m getting the opportunity to document part of an artist’s history, and that’s a pretty special thing,” enthuses Sammy Roenfeldt who specialises in rock music performance photography. He always brought along his camera to rock concerts to snap his favourite performers, but felt a little jealous of the professional photographers who got the best locations and access to shoot the action up close. Eventually, fired by his passion, Roenfeldt acquired a good SLR, taught himself the skills to go with it, and negotiated access through musician friends. Soon he was shooting local bands on assignment for music magazines, covering the 10th anniversary Soundwave Festival, one of Australia’s biggest music events. Everything fell into place when he shot Paramore and the band posted many of his images on its website. His career snow-balled from there and he has now spent the last two years travelling around Australia and the world documenting bands on the road both on and off stage.

Another performance photographer, Chris Herzfeld, says, “My whole philosophy is that I want to take a shot so when it’s reproduced in a magazine or a newspaper, you’re going to stop and look at it and get a feeling for what the show is like. Hopefully it will make you want to see the show.”

With a cinematographer photographer father, Herzfeld grew up in an environment filled with “a million cameras” and he reflects it was natural for him to go into photography. He began working as a professional performance photographer in 2003, as the photographic technical manager on Australian Dance Theatre’s (ADT) major project ‘HELD’,

alongside New York dance photographer Lois Greenfield.

“I have found that although a performance subtly changes every night, there are moments that jump out at you that are really strong, and that as an audience member you’ll remember. It’s those types of moments that you want to capture,” he says.

Meanwhile, Philippe Penel explains, “I’m seeking to capture the essence of what the performer is projecting, but also the theatrical lighting and ambience, which can be dramatic. The best performers make you feel many emotions, and they make you forget their technical and acting skills, the countless hours of practise. You’re left with the raw beauty of the act, and that is what I seek to portray in my images.”

Penel always liked photography, and remembering how he played with cameras as a child, he muses there must be





a photography gene in his family because his brother is a photographer as well. He took up the craft professionally when a relative encouraged him to follow his passion. At first he did everything, from weddings to corporate work. As the years went by, though, he became more focused with a deepening interest in capturing movement, especially in the performing arts. Now, with years of experience, he captures movement instinctively. In fact he says if he consciously thinks about when to press the trigger, he can miss the moment!

Behind the moment

Herzfeld says there's no easy answer to that million-dollar question about when to push the shutter button to capture the right, most revealing moment. His two decades as a television

cameraman covering sport was great training for shooting performance, particularly dance. He learned how to read the plays, the movement of the event, and simultaneously coordinate hands, head and eyes. Capturing the right moment becomes ingrained somehow, like fine cooking becomes ingrained in great chefs. He says seeing a performance of theatre or dance before you shoot it is a valuable opportunity to acquaint yourself with costumes, lighting, where the performers will be and how they interact with the set. If you have shot the rehearsals you'll find that once the show is on stage with lighting and costuming, it can look quite different.

Roенfeldt echoes those sentiments, and adds that every show is different and anything can happen. But he emphasises that research will improve your chances of capturing compelling

ABOVE

Josh Franceschi of You Me At Six. Canon 5D Mk III, 24-70mm f/2.8 lens @ 24mm, 1/320s @ f/2.8, ISO 800. Photo by Sammy Roенfeldt.



Herzfeld's five performance categories

Herzfeld suggests performance photography can be broken down into five categories, with each requiring different equipment. The first is rehearsal shots taken in the rehearsal room, or in studio showings where there are minimal lighting sets, or during rehearsals on stage. Rehearsals tend to be badly lit, and with fluoro lights and mercury vapour, you're likely to find everything that's unfriendly for a modern digital camera. The second is marketing shots taken in studio set-ups, or stage set-ups which replicate the look and feel of the show. The highest quality marketing images are generally studio based. Headshots are the third category. Every program has headshots of the performers in it. If you want to do performance photography, perfect your 'headshot' technique, he says. The penultimate category is show performance shots. In the theatre, prior to the actual performance, he moves about the back of the stage or in the wings for a different view, shooting hand-held. There is no time for set-ups, and you must keep out of everyone's way. He compares it a little to being like a fly on the wall. The last category is personal projects where Herzfeld works closely with dancers, taking the time to experiment with different photographic and lighting techniques to advance his art of shooting performers.

Philippe Penel on post production

Penel says, "I work with RAW format and I choose the best shots in Adobe Bridge. I'll correct the colour balance, especially for stage performances. I clean up skin imperfections, but I don't go overboard unless a client specifically requests it." Penel says the most difficult problem to fix in post-production is skin colour in situations when the stage colours are mono-coloured, like bright red or green.

Sammy Roenfeldt on post production

Roefeldt says, "I'm pretty OCD when it comes to my file management and work-flow. All the gigs I shoot are in band folders dated for each show, and so on. "As for editing, I use Adobe Bridge to sort through my photos. First thing

I do is to load my photos in Bridge then go through them one by one, selecting the ones I like. I then go for a second look through these, culling ones which are similar. For me, when I'm taking live photos, less is more. You don't need to post two photos of essentially the same pose. I then open up my images in Adobe Camera RAW and do all my touch-ups in there. To be honest, I don't do a whole heap with my live photos other than enhance what's already there. I think this is really important. I'll adjust the white balance to bring out natural skin tones wherever possible and then just highlights, shadows, and so on using curves. I also play around with saturation and luminance with the colours a bit, just to make the photo 'pop' a bit more. For the better part, each photo will only take me a few minutes to edit. On the odd occasion I will bring a live photo into Photoshop to remove a stray mic stand or something if it's distracting from the photo. But ideally I like keeping the photo as true to the environment I shot in as possible."

Chris Herzfeld on post production

Herzfeld says he shoots "as clean as possible" to minimise the time he has to spend in post-production. His work doesn't involve any Photoshop pasting or cutting. His philosophy is that what you see is what you get. "I don't use trampolines or harnesses. I don't pose the dancers. The dancers are moving in my shots. I don't use a motor winder. All shots are 'one takes'. The dancers jump and the shot is taken, with usually no more than six shots per set up." He shoots in RAW mode, and everything gets processed because under mercury vapour or fluoro lighting the camera will throw up a different colour. He takes this approach even if it means overnight turnarounds. He agrees it's time consuming, but he says, "It depends on how you want your images to be seen. I use mainly what you'd class as traditional darkroom techniques – dodging, burning, colour correction, exposure, and because I'm not cutting or pasting, we're not adding elements to the images. I try to set up efficient work flows for post-production by using batch processing as much as possible, but particularly with the rehearsal shots I end up having to make adjustments to each shot."

“As much as you may want to use flash, do not use it in live performances. It’s distracting, it ruins the vibe of the show and the capture is not true to the show itself.”



LEFT

“I’m lucky in that I sponsor a number of independent choreographers who are also good friends and they let me go anywhere in the theatre to get the shots I need,” says photographer Chris Herzfeld. “This shot was taken from the wings through the final rehearsal. To get these types of shots you need a very good relationship with not only the dance company but also the theatre. Always ask before attempting these shots. The dancers are, left to right: Kialea Nadine Williams, Kimball Wong, Madeline Edwards, and Alex Baden Bryce. This was taken from Daniel Jaber’s ‘Agile.’” Nikon D3S, 24-70mm f/2.8 lens @ 36mm, 1/500s @ f/4, ISO 10000, handheld.

OPPOSITE

Hayley Williams of Paramore. Canon 5D Mk III, 24-70mm f/2.8 lens @ 24mm, 1/400s @ f/3.2, ISO 1600. Photo by Sammy Roenfeldt.

images. With the internet you can view bands online to observe, for instance, any iconic moves and get a “general vibe” of how the artists perform on stage.

“The key for me is doing a bit of research before each show, working out simple things such as whether the lead singer is left or right handed. If you know that, it will help you identify where to stand in front of stage. If they’re right handed and you’re standing on the right of the artist, the microphone will cover their face. But if you position yourself on the left, it opens you up to getting shots of their facial expressions,” he explains.

It all comes down to experience, Penel says, drawn from years of practice and studying your own and other’s work, to know what looks good in two dimensions. You have to be prepared and know, for instance, when the dancer is about to do a grand jeté or a back flip. He advises beginners to get to know their genre. If you want to capture ballet, go to ballet performances. If you prefer circus or hip-hop go to those shows. He says they’re all similar, but different.

Techniques that work

Turning away from the psychology to technical issues, Herzfeld nominates setting the camera on automatic as the biggest mistake first-time performance shooters can make. He urges beginners to shoot everything in manual mode. “I try to max out everything. I generally shoot between ISO 8,000 and 10,000. With my Nikon D4, I’d be shooting closer to ISO 20,000. I do

pick the lowest ISO setting possible in the circumstances to reduce the noise. I try to then shoot on the highest shutter speed with the greatest depth of field. This changes right throughout the performance, and you’re continuously changing absolutely everything,” he explains.

He recommends people use manual focus because modern cameras aren’t quick enough. Autofocus is designed for movements generally left to right, or right to left, and are not designed, and do not work well, when objects are moving towards you, and then quickly moving away from you.

“For most performances I’ll put up to four cameras in the theatre if I can. I operate one and I’ll use three with pocket wizard remotes to trigger them. With the low-percentage shots, I might only get one or two from those cameras, but that enables me to get a far greater coverage. I use a D800 and a couple of Nikon D3s, and a D3S, when I’m doing that.”

For performance photography, Penel suggests you can use any camera with good low-light capabilities. Use the smallest f-number – the widest aperture – with an ISO of 200 for studio shooting, and between 200 and 64,000 for performances. He recommends including a couple of lenses in your kit – a 24-70mm for up close work, and a 70-200mm for distant shots. A tripod is useful if you use a heavy zoom. He aims to avoid flash as it kills the theatrical lighting. Don’t move too much so you can avoid camera shake, and focus on the main performers as the depth of field is usually quite shallow, especially with a

IN THE BAG

Chris Herzfeld's kit

Performance

- Cameras: Up to four Nikon cameras, including D3S, D3 (x2), D800
- Four tripods
- Pocket wizard remotes for the cameras
- Laptop computer
- Lenses: 16-24mm, 24-70mm, 70-200mm, 20mm prime (all f/2.8)
- Torch
- Lens tissues
- Spare batteries (for everything)
- Speedlights with Pocket Wizard triggers
- Small soft box 9 ("Just in case someone wants a quick headshot or similar").
- Battery chargers

Studio kit

- Camera: Mamiya Leaf AFi-11 12 (80 megapixels, medium format)
- Lenses: Schneider, 50mm, 80mm, 120mm (all f/2.8)
- Six Broncolor A4 Grafit floor packs
- 10 Pulso 3200 J heads
- Various light modifiers, soft boxes
- Heavy duty tripod
- Apple iMac, which is always shoot tethered in the studio

Location kit

- Cameras: Nikon D3S, D800
- Lenses: 16-24mm, 24-70mm, 70-200mm (all f/2.8)
- Eight Speedlights with Pocket Wizard controllers
- Battery chargers

Rehearsals kit

- Cameras: Nikon D3S, D800
- Lenses: 16-24mm, 24-70mm, 70-200mm
- Monopod
- Computer
- Torch
- Lens tissues
- Spare batteries for everything
- Battery chargers

Philippe Penel's Kit

- Cameras: Nikon D3S, D610, D800. Penel says, "I still have my trusty Nikon FM2 film camera, even though it sits on my mantle piece as decoration these days!"
- Lenses: Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8, 70-200mm f/2.8
- Tripods and supports: Manfrotto, Gitzo monopods and tripods

- Flash: Nikon SB800
- Lighting: Various Elinchrom heads and soft boxes
- Favourite piece of equipment: "My Nikon D3S. It might not be the latest, but it's a solid performer in low light. It handles contrast beautifully and the files aren't too large. It is also solidly built."

Sammy Roenfeldt's kit

- Roenfeldt says, "My go-to camera is a Canon 5D Mk III. I also have the battery grip for this camera, as it helps balance the weight as well as giving me more battery life so I don't have to keep changing batteries at a show. This camera is incredible in low-light situations. I have also just recently bought a Canon 6D as a back-up. This little camera is incredible and a great option if you are on a bit more of a budget. It doesn't have all the bells and whistles of the Mk III, but it's great in low-light situations. It is also full frame. The first lens I ever bought was the Canon 24-70mm f/2.8 USM. It is the most universal lens – a 'must have' for all music photographers. If you're starting out and saving up for one lens, get this lens first. I still have this lens in my kit and still use it at most shows. I also have a Canon 16-35mm f/2.8 USM. It's a super sharp and amazing wide-angle lens, which is great for smaller shows or if you need to get big crowd shots from on stage. The Canon 70-200mm f/2.8 USM is great for extreme close ups of performers or if you are shooting a show with high stages. I would use all of these at almost every show."
- Tripod? "Tripods aren't very useful in a live music situation, so I don't own one, but I do own a Manfrotto carbon fibre monopod. It's super lightweight and an effective tool if you couple it with remote triggers for your camera. You can lift your camera above the crowd and get some really cool shots."
- Favourite piece of equipment? "Cameras aside, my favourite piece of gear is actually my ThinkTank international roller case. As I'm on the road a lot of the time, this camera roller is hands down the best bag I have ever used."



long telephoto or zoom. During a performance, he says, you have no control over the lighting, and to avoid glare, you'll need to change your position. If the lighting is bad, you can attempt a more artistic interpretation. The colour balance is also likely to be all over the place, but you can correct it to some extent in post-production software, particularly if you shoot RAW which offers more flexibility in post production. In a studio shoot, he aims for simplicity and emphasis on the performer's skills, grace, flexibility, or strength. He says his set-up depends on the scope of the shoot, of course, and what he wants to achieve.

"As I do shoots in and out of the studio using different backgrounds, they all require different techniques and creative lighting, from using large soft boxes to grids, scrim and reflectors," says Penel.

When it comes to choosing a camera, Herzfeld emphasises the importance of fast shutter response. "Once you press the button you want the shutter to fire. You don't want there to be any sort of lag because dancers move incredibly fast," he says.

He points out that digital cameras have a longer shutter lag compared to the old film cameras. Your camera should have a short lag and also superior low-light capabilities. Remember that in some situations you do not really have the time to change lenses during the performance. In some theatres the only place you're allowed to shoot from is the back row, so you're forced to use a telephoto lens.

"The further away from the stage you are, the less distance you have to pan the camera to follow a dancer moving on stage,

therefore having the effect of slowing the movement down,” says Herzfeld. “If you use a wide angle and you’re sitting in the front row, you have to pan the camera much further and more quickly to follow the same movement.” He recommends enthusiasts don’t use filters for any reason because “you don’t want anything in front of the lens to hamper the light struggling to get through”.

Roenfeldt reflects that the biggest mistake novice performance photographers make (and he confesses to being guilty of it at the start) is being “trigger happy”. Take your time, he counsels, have your camera at the ready, look for the right moment and then take your shot. For rock performances, you need a camera where you feel in easy control of ISO, shutter speed, and aperture. Shoot no slower than 1/200s for live music situations, he says. A high shutter speed is the key to capturing an artist in a fast movement shot. The aperture he normally works with ranges between f/2.8 and f/3.5, and he sets the ISO accordingly. The faster the lens the better, especially when you start out, because you’ll be shooting smaller shows where the lighting and the ambience changes continuously. A 50mm f/1.8 is a good lens to begin with, being relatively inexpensive, but good in low light. “As much as you may want to use flash, do not use it in live performances,” he says. “It’s distracting, it ruins the vibe of the show, and the capture is not true to the show itself. Find ways to make the show’s lighting work for you.” If he’s shooting with f/2.8 at 1/200s and the image is still dark, he will bump up the ISO rating. Don’t be afraid of some noise in the photos if it means you can shoot with a higher shutter speed, he says. Roenfeldt always uses evaluative metering and shoots in burst mode, especially for moments such as a jumping shot, where he can snap action in progress.

Etiquette

In a darkened theatre you obviously want to avoid blazing away with flash, but you should also turn off infrared. Be respectful to the performers and the artistic team in general, Herzfeld



ABOVE

Anthony Takataka, DC Academy, Sydney. Nikon D610, 80-200mm lens, 1/400s @ f/2.8, ISO 5000. Shot in RAW, very little image manipulation, sharpening and noise softening. Photo by Philippe Penel.

OPPOSITE

Artist Emma Phillips, photographed in studio. “I used one large soft box at camera left,” says photographer Philippe Penel. Nikon D610, 24-70mm f/2.8 lens @ 35mm, 1/250s @ f/18, ISO 250. Shot in RAW, medium image manipulation, sharpening and noise softening, removal of skin blemishes.

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ABOVE

Bert McCracken of The Used. Canon 5D Mk III, 16-35mm f/2.8 lens @ 16mm, 1/320s @ f/2.8, ISO 1600. Photo by Sammy Roenfeldt.

RIGHT

"I used one flash head with a grid at camera left," says photographer Philippe Penel. "This image was taken as part of a series for a band and they were after a very stylistic look in black and white. I asked the player to start playing to avoid getting a look that was too staged." Fujifilm S2, 24-70mm f/2.8 lens, 1/125s @ f/11, ISO 100. Black background. Shot in RAW, medium image manipulation, sharpening.



says. If you're there to do a job, particularly in dance, it's incredibly dangerous for the dancers if you get in their way. If you cause an injury to a dancer you are likely to never work in that theatre again!

When Herzfeld shoots with an audience in the theatre he'll organise for a few seats to be left free around him so he doesn't discomfort the paying public. In those circumstances, he says he uses his D3S because it has a silent mode, and most festivals and theatres will request it. When you go to a theatre, make sure you know who is who and who controls what – for instance, stage managers, or company managers.

Penel adds that most theatres prohibit the shooting of performances except for professional photographers when they are hired by the studio or theatre. When there are children involved you'll also need a "working with children" certificate.

Roefeldt notes rock music concert photography is a lot different from any other style in terms of the permissions and authorisations you may need to obtain. Most venues will not let you just bring in an SLR camera. Local bands appreciate getting images of their performances, so contact them. For bigger shows you will need to be shooting for a publication or for the band themselves. He says novices will have to sign photo release forms which might state they can only use their images for a certain publication at a certain time. He cautions, "Some release forms are ridiculous and basically you give up all your rights to the photo." Make sure you read any contracts carefully before you sign them. And remember, you're there to document the performance, but don't get in the way of fans who have paid good money to see their favourite bands perform. 📸

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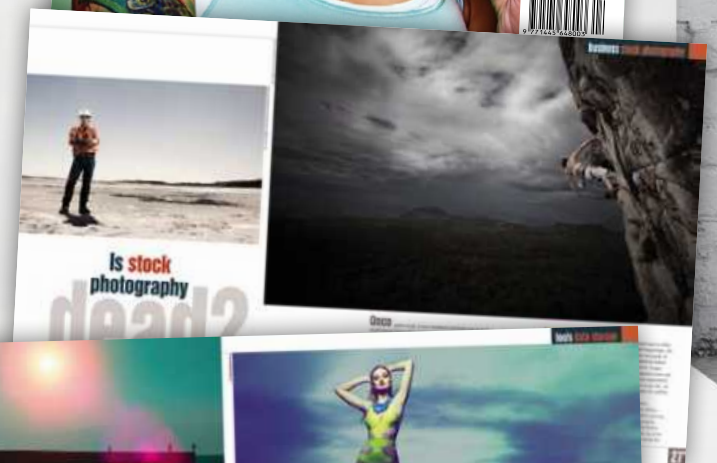
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Epson Surecolor P600

Rich blacks and vibrant colours are the order of the day for Epson's newest A3+ photo printer, writes Anthony McKee.

Good blacks are important to a photographer. A decent pair of black jeans, a black T-shirt and a black jacket is almost the corporate look for most professional shooters, although at the practical level black clothing does make one's reflection less obvious around reflective subjects. But good blacks are also essential when you're making a photographic print. While the white of a print is almost invariably determined by the whiteness of the paper, the black is governed by what you add to the paper; the darker the black, the better the overall tonal range of your print. Years ago the blackness of a print was

determined by the silver content of a paper. More expensive papers usually had more silver, which increased the D-max of the blacks. But these days it's the ink which governs how dark we can make the blacks.

Recently, Epson released a new generation of printers, the Surecolor P600 A3+ and the Surecolor P800 A2, and both have been designed to add even more density to the blacks. I had the opportunity to test the Surecolor P600, and although it is the smaller of the two printers, it is probably large enough for most keen amateurs. The P600 features Epson's new PrecisionCore print head (as does the P800 printer); Epson claims



this printer can produce a maximum black density (D-Max) of 2.8 thanks to the better delivery of each ink droplet. This number won't mean much to most readers unless you have worked with densitometers before, but until recently, a Dmax of 2.3 to 2.5 was considered good black for inkjet printers.

The new print head has 180 nozzles for each of the UltraChrome HD inks. These inks include yellow, vivid light magenta, vivid magenta, light cyan, cyan, and four blacks – a photo black, light black, light light black and a matte black. The matt black switches in automatically as required although regular switching between the two will use up extra ink. Maximum resolution from the printer is 5760 x 1440 optimised DPI.

The P600 can make prints from sheet paper up to A3+ (329mm x 483mm) in size, or you can print directly from 329mm roll paper up to a maximum print length of 3.27 metres. The unit has a 2.7-inch colour touchscreen which makes it easy to set-up and use. The printer also has wireless connectivity using the 802.11 standard; setting up the wireless link took less than two minutes due to the keyboard on the LCD touchscreen. You can print wirelessly from your computer or from a smart phone, even without a router, although if you prefer the glory of cables, the printer also has USB and Ethernet 10Base-T/100Base-TX interfaces.

I have been using another Epson workhorse, the Stylus Pro 3880, for a few years. With both printers side-by-side, I did some ink "head-to-head" testing. Using the same image files, same photo-quality papers and the appropriate profiles for each printer, there was an obvious edge to photographs printed on the Epson Surecolor P600.

Colours, in particular the reds and magentas, have a more noticeable vibrancy to them. This is probably not going to be a selling point for portrait and wedding photographers, but the extended colour gamut will appeal to colour landscape and natural history photographers.

For me, it was the black and white modes on the P600 that sang out loud. Monochrome prints from this printer have a solid feel to them, and at first glance they can easily pass for the silver gelatin prints of old. The tonal range is clean and the detail is wonderful, particularly if you're working with low-noise files. The print interface is relatively straightforward to use, although as always, making sure you use the appropriate paper and profiles, along with a calibrated monitor, is the key to success when making your own prints. For most of my testing I used Photoshop to colour-manage the outputs, and I had consistent results using some of my favourite papers. I also made some black and white prints while letting the printer manage the colour output and I was very satisfied with the results. The printer gives you a choice of four monochrome tonal settings: neutral, warm, cool and if you're brave enough to go there, sepia.

As is often the case when you test equipment, you end up asking yourself if you feel the need to trade up. In this instance I'm going to pass. It might be five years old, but the difference I'm seeing between these two printers isn't enough to have me to sell one so I can upgrade to the other. If you're a first-time buyer, though, I would definitely look at buying the P600, particularly if you want to start making prints and waving your banner as a fine-art photographer. This printer is the new

OPPOSITE

Testing a new printer is always a great opportunity for revisiting favourite images from the past. A water droplet caught bouncing out of a model's mouth was ideal for revealing the Epson Surecolor P600's vibrant colour reproduction and capacity to create a solid black. To the left, the black and white was printed using the printer's black and white settings in warm mode.

LEFT

Overall the Epson Surecolor P600 is easy to use, thanks in part to the 2.7 inch colour LCD touchscreen. Setting up wireless connectivity, choosing paper settings and even changing inks is straightforward.

Specifications

Format: A3 (297 x 420mm), A3+ (329 x 483mm), Roll Paper (329mm wide / 2" core).

Maximum print length from roll paper: 3267mm.

Paper Handling: Maximum Width is 329mm

Paper Thickness: 0.08mm to 0.30mm

Print Method: Epson Micro Piezo™ On-demand Inkjet

Nozzle configuration: 180 nozzles each per colour (Photo Black or Matte Black, Light Black, Light Light Black, Cyan, Vivid Magenta, Yellow, Light Cyan, Vivid Light Magenta)

Minimum Droplet Size: 2-picoliter

Resolution: 5760 x 1440 optimised dpi using Resolution Performance Management (RPM) Technology

Inks: Epson UltraChrome® HD Ink with Vivid Magenta. Auto switching system for Photo Black and Matte Black.

Print Speed: A4 (21 x 29.7cm) approx. 1 min 32sec, A3+ (33 x 48cm) approx. 2 min 33sec

Operating Systems: Windows® 8/8.1 (32-bit, 64-bit), Windows Vista® (32-bit, 64-bit), Windows XP SP1. Mac OS® X 10.6.8 or later.

Interfaces: Hi-Speed USB, Ethernet 10BASE-T/100BASE, Wi-Fi (IEEE802.11 b/g/n).

Operating conditions: Temperature -10 to 35 C°, Humidity -20% to 80%

Dimensions: 616 (W) x 369 (D) x 228mm (H) closed, 616 (W) x 814(D) x 424mm (H) open

Weight: 15kg

Power: 220-240 volts at 50-60 hertz.

Power Consumption: 20-watts in printing mode, 1.4-watts in sleep mode, 0.3-watts in off mode.

benchmark in tonal quality, and my advice is always to buy once and buy right.

The Epson SureColor P600 has a list price of \$1,499, which includes your first full inks worth over \$400. Ink cartridges cost \$47.99 each to replace while an A3+ sized pack of quality photographic inkjet paper will set you back about \$100 for a pack of 25 sheets. In rough numbers, an A3+ print will cost you about \$8 to make. This might sound expensive, until you realise how much photographers used to spend on paper and chemistry to get the same results out of a traditional darkroom. And besides, the ability to print your own award-winning images in the comfort of your own home is pretty difficult to beat! 🌟

More info: www.epson.com.au





With Tony
Harding AAPS,
AFIAP



Shooting for drama

For many years now I have enthusiastically explored photography as an expressive art form. I love landscape photography and also capturing the human condition. I've experimented with creative photography, architectural and music photography as well. I'm a member of the Australian Photographic Society (APS) and the Caulfield Photographic Society, a Melbourne-based camera club established by Paul Robinson. I gained AFIAP honours in 2013. I use a Nikon D7000 SLR and I recently invested in the lighter Olympus EM 1. I prefer Lightroom for my post production, combined with Photoshop. My software

add-ons include NIK and Perfect Photo Suite. I like creating images with impact, thoughtfulness and consideration – whether they are primarily created in-camera or post-processed.

While I've been fortunate enough to have received some photographic recognition, I realise the more I learn about photography, the more there is to learn – and enjoy! I admire the wonderful work of other inspiring photographers like Sarah Hatton (ISO 100 Photography) and Piotr Krol (from Poland). I also have a website with galleries of my selected photographs at www.dramaqueenphotography.com. The name was suggested by my wife! 🌟





**CLOCKWISE
FROM LEFT**

Rocky Foreshore;
Nonchalance; Two
Lighthouses; Market
Stall Holder.





TOP TO BOTTOM

Orchid View;
Strzelecki Ranges;
Choppy at the Pier.



With Jenny Davidson



The real photo

Well known photographer Ken Duncan has introduced a new photography contest that is only open to original photographs without excessive post processing. The question is, what constitutes an 'over processed' image.

I regularly read that an image has had minimal post processing: "Just a bit of colour adjustment to make it closer to what I saw at the time." If this is the case I need to see my optometrist because I don't see those saturated colours anywhere.

Before digital, different film types were used to enhance colour saturation and tonal qualities. Of course, photographers could also use filters to enhance or alter colour and different darkroom techniques could be applied to create a variety of effects that were not an accurate representation of the scene. Of course, filters could also be used to reduce light and slow the movement of water and clouds, and infrared film could be used to change the way the camera recorded colour and light.

Digital imaging has made many of these processes easier to achieve. High Dynamic Range (HDR) is now a feature on most cameras and software with plugins and digital blending making it possible to produce images with detail in the darkest shadows and brightest highlights. This technique uses a number of images taken at different exposures which are then blended in software to produce a considerably wider dynamic range than we could ever have imagined in the days of film.

A similar effect can be used to achieve sharp focus throughout an image particularly close up and macro shots where a number of images are taken with different focus points then blended to produce an image that is in focus from front to back. This technique is known as focus stacking and again software does most of the work.

Simple techniques such as replacing a dull sky in an image can be achieved in minutes. While it is admirable to see someone trying to bring back 'truth' in photography how will the judges of this contest be able to determine that no

manipulation has occurred? A recent report claims that 20% of entries in a World Press Photo competition had to be disqualified because of excessive manipulation and post processing.

If you are entering a competition take the time to read the terms and conditions to make sure you understand what is, and isn't acceptable.

Australian Photographic Society encourage National and International Competitions and points are awarded to members achieving acceptance and awards in these approved exhibitions, ultimately these points accumulate to go towards achieving photographic honours recognised not only in Australia but internationally. This year five International Exhibitions were held with two in Sydney, one Maitland, one circuit in Queensland and a Print only Exhibition in Victoria. Throughout the year a number of National Exhibitions are held and information about these can be found on the APS web site, some of these exhibitions accept both prints and digital images and some only digital, this is a good way to have your images seen and assessed by others you also receive catalogues showing the accepted images, some of these are in print and others are digital but it gives you the opportunity to see how your work compares with others and what the judges like. It is interesting to note how an image can fail in one exhibition and receive awards in another, it is a great way to gain experience. 🍄

Wild fungii. Photo by Jenny Davidson.



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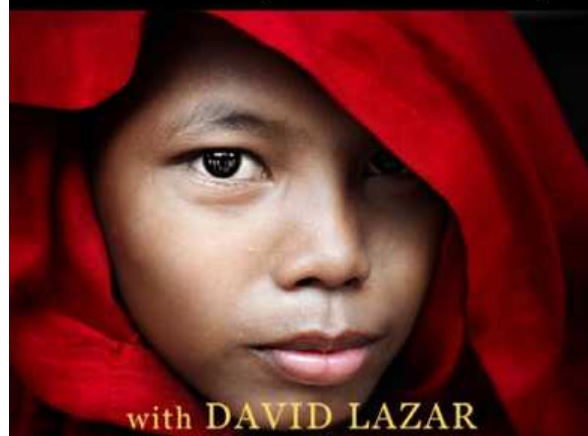
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“The composition is fairly simple and straightforward; it’s the lighting, colour and texture that makes this a rather special still-life shot.”

THIS MONTH’S WINNER!

Great mix of old & new

This photo by Geoff Skoien was inspired by his local camera club’s monthly challenge which was “bottles” (singular, plural or part thereof).

“I got up before sunrise and placed this coke bottle on our old table on the deck,” says Skoien. “The background is an old butter box which was my great Aunt’s. I took a lot of photos, but the ones I liked the best were when the sun rose and shone through the bottle, giving the nice red colours as well as the shadows.”

The effect achieved in this image is quite painterly, almost like the effect you get when you’re painting with light. Adding the water spray was a good touch, as was the carton as a background. The composition is fairly simple and straightforward; it’s the lighting, colour and texture which makes this a rather special still-life shot. It would take it to yet another level if all the elements were original, old Coca Cola memorabilia. However, even as is, you’ve done well.

SAIMA’S TIP: Glass is a wonderful medium for producing interesting effects with lighting.

TITLE: Coke anyone?

PHOTOGRAPHER: Geoff Skoien

DETAILS: Canon EOS 7D, Canon EF 50mm f/1.4 lens, 1/6s @ f/9, ISO 100. Three exposures merged in Photomatix, cropped, exposure adjustments, sharpened in Lightroom





Let there be light

According to Vince Robinson: “There was a really big swell and rough seas at Avalon Beach in Sydney so I went down just before sunset to get some photos of the waves and the clouds on the horizon. My objective was to capture the power of the waves, but what I like most now is the marbled pattern on the breaking wave.” There are some dramatic elements in this scene with those clouds and waves, but you really lucked out with the lighting, which is all in the sky rather than on the waves. That sea – which is the main subject here – is dead, and tweaking and lightening up the shot later doesn’t compensate for the lack of sunshine in the original. While the spray, spume and

shape of that rolling wave are powerful, there’s none of the sparkle and magic that a good dose of sunlight can provide.

SAIMA’S TIP: Software can’t bring sunshine into an image. It needs to be there in the original shot.

TITLE: Big swell at Avalon Beach

PHOTOGRAPHER: Vince Robinson

DETAILS: Nikon D7000, 105 mm focal length, 1/320s @ f/4.5, ISO 100. Increased detail, contrast, vibrancy and exposure in Adobe Lightroom.

Different thinking

Thierry Rocchia put a different take on Sydney’s Centrepont Tower in this photo made at the Asian markets by using the Chinese-style lanterns to highlight the foreground while the tower is back stage. If this scene was taken with a wider aperture, say f/5.6, it would heighten the effect by making the tower in the background softer, and emphasising the lanterns in the foreground. The tower has such an iconic shape it would still be instantly recognisable, but then the image would have more depth. It’s great to see another perspective and those lines, circles and colour add a fresh twist to an old landmark!

SAIMA’S TIP: If everything in an image is in focus, the effect is more two-dimensional, while different degrees of focus give a stronger three-dimensional feel.

TITLE: Untitled

PHOTOGRAPHER: Thierry Rocchia

DETAILS: Ricoh GR, @ 14mm focal length, 1/80s @ f/11, ISO 200.





Keep it simple

Julie Castieau writes: “I have always liked the early bloom of Melbourne’s cherry blossom street trees, before they go into full leaf. I cut off a branch, took it home and photographed it in front of a white matt board, then used a filter to invert it in PhotoShop Elements which transformed the colours from the pink blossom, leaving a surreal looking blossom of green-blue hues in front of a dark background. I then added a darker vignette and a border matching the inverted blossom colour. I tried to get an ‘Asian scroll’ type of effect, but I need to work on this effect more. I used a softened version of the original as a memorial/anniversary card to friends who have lost loved-ones.”

The inverted, other-worldly blue version has strong ‘pop’ effect, but for me the original is far nicer. I find it interesting that you send the understated original to friends for memorials, but the inverted version to Image Doctor. The colours of the original are pretty, the black stem provides a nice outline against the background, and the soft lighting suits the subject well. Did you have a problem with the grey shadow against the white backdrop? If so, you could have lifted the branch off the background and hung it further away and from above to get rid of it. However, the pink version works well and the shadow adds some dimension.

Macro a challenge

Arisara Uaprommat writes: “I found this funny praying mantis peeping through a coriander bush in my veggie patch. It was just like he wanted to say ‘hello’ to me. It was so cute! It was quite hard to get a sharp image as the bush was swaying in the breeze and I had to be quick before it ran away.”

This is pretty good with that amazing-looking greenish-yellow fellow almost hidden in all that green camouflage, but the problem with a macro lens is the lack of depth of field. This makes it hard to get as much of the key parts of the creature – such as the eyes – as well as other parts of the body in sharp focus. You could get more depth of field, and hence more of the mantis in focus, by using f/5.6 or f/8 rather than f/2.8 as your aperture setting. An option would be to bracket in shutter mode for more choice with the apertures. As these critters are not generally fast-moving, you could’ve had enough time to fiddle with settings and also wait for the bush to stop moving before you took your shot.

SAIMA’S TIP: Macro lenses give very little depth of field, and shooting with the aperture wide open (at f/2.8) gives the least depth of field – hence the least sharpness throughout.

TITLE: Hi there

PHOTOGRAPHER: Arisara Uaprommat

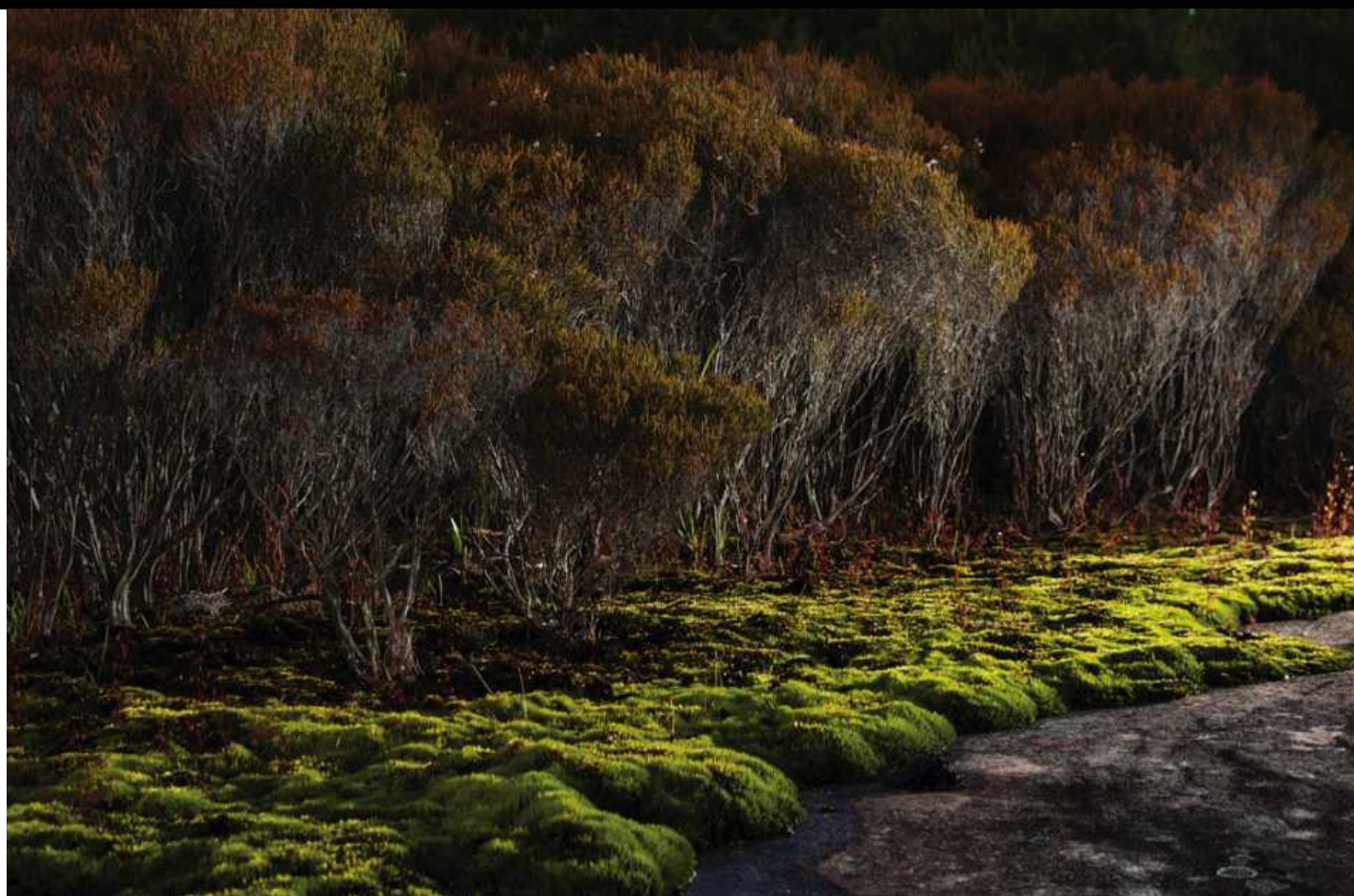
DETAILS: Camera: OMD-EM5 with M.Zuiko Digital 60mm f/2.8 macro lens, 1/125s @ f/2.8, 200 ISO. Slightly increased saturation and sharpened in iPhoto.



SAIMA’S TIP: Simple subjects don’t need special effects to make them more interesting.

TITLE: Winter Blossom

PHOTOGRAPHER: Julie Castieau



Is it the lens?

Trish Neil found these miniature tea trees growing on a rock platform near where she lives and was fascinated by their mystery and otherworldly atmosphere.

“I used off-camera flash set up some distance away, which accentuated the white stems of the trees and the glowing green of the moss,” she writes.

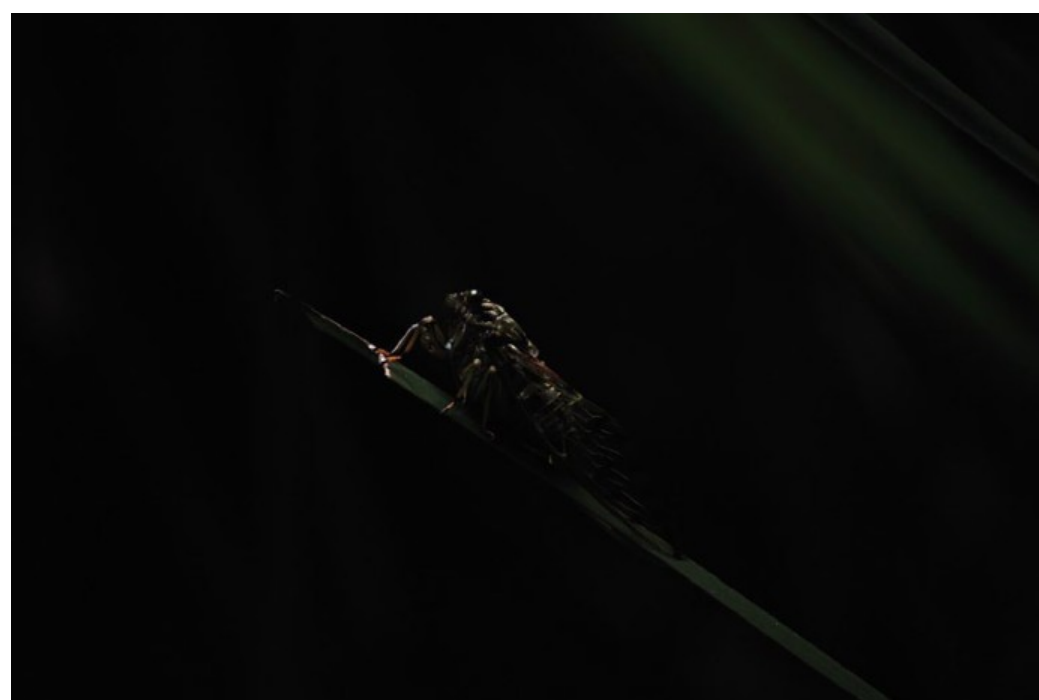
Well, I have to say your subject matter has lovely colour with nice shapes and textures. The shame is that it’s not at all sharp in that mossy area – and elsewhere. It may be down to camera shake or even lens aberration. It’s worth checking online with photo forums to see if other users have had issues with the lens you’re using. If it’s a kit lens, don’t assume it’s a premium lens because it comes from a ‘name’ brand like Nikon. Some of the lenses are priced as low as \$100. If price is your main priority, you can’t expect the best quality. If the problem doesn’t appear to be the lens, then it’s bound to be ‘photographer error’.

SAIMA’S TIP: For good online information about cameras and lenses, a website like www.kenrockwell.com has a lot to offer.

TITLE: Bush bonsai

PHOTOGRAPHER: Trish Neil

DETAILS: Nikon D90, 18-55mm lens @ 48mm, 1/100s at f/11, ISO 200. Nikon Speedlight with extra long extension cord, small adjustments in Photoshop Camera Raw; increased clarity and contrast, a small crop of some bright sky at top and dropped exposure by 0.3.



Consider ring flash

Kevin Palmer says, “this cicada image was an early attempt with back lighting and one of three quick ‘grab’ photos. Starting head on, I took one step to the right each time. Then he was gone. The location was O’Reilly’s car park at Lamington National Park in NSW.”

The understatement in such a subtle image is quite pleasant, but this is an example of top lighting rather than back lighting. In this sort of grab situation lighting can be a bit of pot luck, and the shot really needs a bit more illumination to better show up that little creature. The lack of light in this case means that the edge of the wing bottom has disappeared into the darkness. A ring flash would have been a big bonus in getting that

extra lighting. An added issue is that a shutter speed of 1/200s is just not fast enough for the 200mm focal length so the subject is not as sharp as it should be. A sharp subject is critical in such a minimalist shot.

SAIMA’S TIP: An inexpensive ‘no-name’ LED ring flash can provide continuous lighting and shadowless illumination for close-up shots.

TITLE: Cicada

PHOTOGRAPHER: Kevin Palmer

DETAILS: Nikon D90, 55-200mm lens @ 200mm, 1/200s @ f/5.6, 400 ISO, 0.07 EV, shutter priority, spot metered. No software changes, converted from RAW with View Nx2.

Stabilise your tripod

Jason McCosker says: “I borrowed a 75-300mm lens – a 150-600mm equivalent on the Olympus OMD E-M5 – to shoot some sports and some friends said there were four-to-five-foot [waves] down at Redhead Beach in Newcastle. I don’t normally use tripods, but given the length of the lens I thought it would be a good idea so I set up on some rocks and ensured my shutter speed was faster than 1/600s to freeze the motion and avoid any vibration. I noticed a large container ship on its way into the harbour and moved around to capture it in the distance to give a sense of locality. I left feeling the lens and small camera did its job very well.”

You’ve planned well to get a dramatic sports shot, and wisely used a much faster shutter speed than the inverse of the focal length. You could even go up to 1/4000s to ensure maximum sharpness. The faster the better for fast-moving subject matter! I’m not quite convinced you needed the container ship and the “sense of locality” as it does take attention away from the main subject (the surfer) and your purpose was to shoot sports. I think you also need to do something about the colour, which has a pinkish tinge, most noticeable in the blue water and the ship, but also in the surfer. A bit more colour temperature adjustment is needed to get the right balance.

SAIMA’S TIP: With long lenses, windy conditions and action, a tripod needs to be as stable as possible – maybe by weighting the centre post – to avoid camera movement and loss of sharpness.

TITLE: Life is good

PHOTOGRAPHER: Jason McCosker

DETAILS: Olympus OMD E-M5 with 75-300mm lens, 1/1000s @ f/6.7, ISO 200. Image processed in Lightroom – colour, contrast and temperature adjustments, cropped to portrait format.



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How to submit an image

- Email entries to: imagedoctor@australianphotography.com with “Image Doctor” in the subject line.
- Tell us your name, the title of the picture and up to 150 words about how you created it.
- Only one image per person per month.
- Images must be saved in JPEG format. Maximum file size is 5MB. Include your name in the filename of the image.
- An Australian address is required in order to receive the prize.
- Employees of Yaffa Publishing or the sponsor are not eligible to win the prize.
- The editor’s decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

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